PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2003–04

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26 January 2004

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 26 January 2004

HEALTH

Direct Payments

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): The Government are committed to see an increase in the take-up of direct payments, as they are an excellent way for individuals using social services to gain control and independence over their own lives. Direct payments are cash payments made in lieu of social service provisions to individuals who have been assessed as needing services. I understand that some councils are expressing some confusion about the ability of individuals using their direct payments to pay a spouse or other close relative.

Direct payments cannot be used routinely by individuals to pay spouses, or close relatives who live in the same household. The regulations were changed in April 2003 to give local councils some discretion in this matter. They can allow payments to be made in this way, but only where they are satisfied that securing the service from the relative is necessary to meet satisfactorily that individual's need for that service.

Regulations have never specified that close relatives living outside the household could not be paid using a direct payment and there is no legal restriction on individuals using their direct payment in this way. Councils are however able to make conditions about who can be employed in individual circumstances. There are often legitimate reasons for doing so but a decision should be taken according to the merits of each individual case.

Hepatitis C Compensation Scheme

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): The Department announced in August of last year the setting up of an ex-gratia payment scheme for people infected with Hepatitis C from National Health Service blood or blood products. Since that announcement, work has progressed on the detail of the scheme.

The UK scheme will award eligible claimants with initial lump sum payments of £20,000 to all those who now have Hepatitis C from blood or blood products, with a further £25,000 being awarded when people reach a more advanced stage of illness.

We feel that these are fair and reasonable payments and hope that they will help alleviate some of the problems people who have been affected in this way are experiencing.

Work is ongoing to set up the independent body that will administer the scheme and to introduce the necessary legislation so that people will not lose their social security benefits as a result.

In the course of negotiations we have been able to define a further level of detail on eligibility and scheme administration which will be advantageous to claimants. In particular, bureaucracy will be minimised for people making a claim, in recognition that it will be difficult for some people to gather evidence from twenty years ago.

The scope of the scheme has also been extended to include people who have cleared the virus as a result of treatment and to those infected as a result of the virus being transmitted from someone who was infected from blood or blood products. The scheme will also consider people who were infected with HIV as well as Hepatitis C in the same way as those only infected with the Hepatitis C virus.

Work is progressing on finalising the application process for awards and setting up the independent body that will administer the scheme. Organisations such as the Haemophilia Society and Hepatitis C Trust will be fully involved in that work to help ensure the procedures are as user friendly as possible.

We will work with the relevant organisations to ensure claimants know what to do to make an application.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Post-Primary Education

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy): The Government are today publishing the report from the working group, chaired by Mr. Steve Costello, which was asked to provide advice about new post-primary arrangements in Northern Ireland. Copies of the report are being placed in the Library. As part of its remit, the working group was asked to take account of the responses to the extensive consultation on the Burns report, including the diversity of views on academic selection.

The working group's advice has been carefully considered. The review of post-primary education has been ongoing for over 5 years. The uncertainty about the shape of post-primary education must be ended. The Government believe that the advice provides a sound basis for moving forward and has accepted the recommendations in full.

Many Northern Ireland schools enjoy a high reputation, but the current transfer and post-primary arrangements have significant weaknesses. They do well for some pupils but not for others, and there are inequalities of access. These issues must be addressed.

The key concept of the new arrangements is an entitlement framework to guarantee access for all pupils to a wide range of academic and vocational course options. This will directly address the current disparity of access to courses and, for the first time, secure a proportion of provision as being vocational. It will complement the revised statutory curriculum being proposed by CCEA and will provide increasing choice and flexibility as pupils mature. Extensive collaboration among schools and with FE colleges will be required in order to secure the full range of provision in each locality.

The working group advised that any alternative selection arrangements would be no less problematical than the current arrangements; that it is educationally unsound to select pupils at age eleven; that eleven is too early to commit pupils to particular pathways; and that it is unsound to believe that the more able should follow only academic courses. Academic selection will end and new transfer arrangements will be based on informed parental and pupil choice. An academic route will remain available, but pupils and parents will choose this pathway rather than being selected for it.

Ending the transfer tests immediately would create a huge demand for places in popular schools and it will be necessary to create the conditions for new arrangements to work. The entitlement framework and the associated collaboration arrangements will need to be in place. The pupil profile, being developed by CCEA, will also need to be in place to give parents the information to help make informed decisions, and new admissions criteria will be required to determine admissions where schools are oversubscribed. The group recommended that further work is required to determine those criteria and Government will be taking this forward immediately.

To provide the time to create the conditions to end the tests, the working group recommended that the last tests should be held in Autumn 2008. The Government have accepted this advice.

The Government are not specifying what types of schools will exist under future arrangements. Any school offering access to the entitlement framework has a place in the new arrangements. These could include new school types such as specialist schools able to respond to local opportunities and needs. Schools where the curricular emphasis is on academic courses will continue to exist provided they meet the entitlement framework, including access to a range of vocational courses as well as academic courses.

Implementation will involve schools and FE colleges working together to develop arrangements for their area. Support will be provided to help them through this process and to facilitate local discussion and decision-making. Officials will be taking forward consideration of related policy issues such as school transport, open enrolment and the arrangements for school funding. This work, and the work on admissions criteria, will provide opportunities for consultation with education partners and others on the detailed aspects of the proposals.

The Government believe the working group has charted a way forward which deserves the widest support. It is a new and bold approach to guarantee access to an educational entitlement for every pupil irrespective of their background or circumstances, where they live, or the school they attend. It will impact on all schools and the Government will be working in partnership with the education sector to tailor the post-primary arrangements to meet the specific needs of Northern Ireland.

Pupils need to be prepared for life and work in a modern technological world and a global economic market where the pace of change is accelerating. The Government's decisions today create the conditions to take this forward, to raise standards for all pupils and provide the world-class education they rightly deserve.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy): The Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service acts as accounting officer for the resources allocated to the prison service in accordance with the financial arrangements set out in the framework document.

To reflect current business needs, I have approved the following increases to this delegated authority.

	Amount and Conditions
1. Capital	
New works	£3 million plus VAT for any one project (previously £2 million plus VAT)
Purchase of land	£1 million for any one project (previously £150,000 plus VAT)
2. Losses	
Write off losses coming under Section 36 of "Government Accounting"	£50,000 (previously £10,000)

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Merchants and Saddlers

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): With the consent of the Treasury, the schedule of fees for registration, retention and restoration of Agricultural Merchants and Saddlers with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain effective from January 2004 has been determined. This is given in the attached table:

	Fees	
Application in respect of each premises	*Previous fee* £	*New fee* £
Agricultural Merchants		
For registration under Article 5	232	232
For retention of registration under Article 5	153	161
For restoration of registration under Article 5	197	197
Saddlers		
For registration under Article 5	127	127
For retention of registration under Article 5	83	85
For restoration of registration under Article 5	107	107

DEFENCE

Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): I am pleased to report to the House the latest developments in our plans to provide the Royal Air Force with a modern replacement air refuelling capability. The future strategic tanker aircraft (FSTA) programme is planned to replace the RAF's ageing fleet

of VC10 and TriStar aircraft around the end of the decade. We have been considering for some time whether the FSTA capability can be provided through a service-based contract with industry under the private finance initiative (PFI). I can now report that, following a detailed assessment process, a bid from AirTanker Ltd has been judged to offer the best prospective value for money PFI solution to the FSTA requirement. This decision marks a key milestone on this vital project.

Under a PFI contract, industry would own and maintain the aircraft and provide training services, infrastructure and some personnel, whilst the RAF would undertake military operations. A PFI contract has the potential to offer considerable scope for innovation, not least because the contractor will be able to use aircraft not required by the RAF in peacetime to generate revenue, through commercial usage. Industry is also best placed to manage the through life risks of owning a fleet of modern jet airline aircraft. Two PFI consortiums submitted bids last year. AirTanker Ltd, which comprises Rolls Royce, EADS, Cobham and Thales, proposed a service using Airbus A330 aircraft, while the Tanker Transport Services Company (TTSC), which comprises BAE Systems, Boeing, Serco and Spectrum Capital, proposed a service using Boeing 767 aircraft. The competition was keenly fought. However, our judgment is that AirTanker's proposal offers the best prospective solution for the armed forces, the taxpayer and UK industry.

We will now take forward single bidder negotiations with AirTanker Ltd, aimed at concluding a PFI contract as soon as possible. I should stress however, this remains a complex and challenging PFI programme. A number of detailed issues remain to be resolved and we look to AirTanker to work with us over the coming months to resolve the outstanding issues. A final decision on whether or not to proceed with a PFI contract will not be taken until these negotiations have been satisfactorily concluded. I will of course ensure that the House is kept fully in touch with significant developments.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Higher Education Funding

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Charles Clarke): In my statement to the House on 8 January I set out measures to improve the student support arrangements that would operate alongside the introduction of variable tuition fees in higher education from autumn 2006. I said we would establish an independent review, working with the Office for Fair Access, to report to the House, on all aspects of the new arrangements based on the first three years' operation of the policy. I can now give more details on the draft remit of the review. During the passage of the Bill I would welcome comments and suggestions for amendments to this remit.

The review, which will be conducted by a commission, will work on the basis of evidence from the first three years' operation of the variable fee arrangements. It will report to Parliament and will cover three main areas.

The impact of the new arrangements on higher education institutions (HEIs):

Charging policies, and how far HEIs have varied their fees.

The additional income HEIs have raised and how they have used it.

The provision of bursaries and other financial support.

Any effect on the range, mix and take-up of subjects and qualifications offered, including any effect on foundation degrees, courses lasting longer than three years and the regional composition of HEI provision.

A financial assessment of the relative impact on different parts of the higher education sector, and an analysis of future funding pressures.

The impact of the new arrangements on students and prospective students

Overall level of application and participation in higher education.

Student support arrangements, including those for those from the poorest backgrounds as well as those above the threshold for Government support.

Choice of institution and course, mode of study (full time/part time)

Quality of teaching received, attainment, and likelihood of completing a course.

Levels of debt; students' assessment of the value of HE, and rates of return from gaining a degree.

Patterns in subsequent employment—particularly recruitment to the public services—or decisions to go on to further study.

Any differential effect on particular groups; for example, lower socio economic groups; men and women; different ethnic groups; people with disabilities; people from different regions.

Future policy

Whether any improvements should be made to the graduate contribution scheme and the upper limit for tuition fees.

What changes should be made to the arrangements for student support in order to ensure that students from the poorest family backgrounds on the most expensive courses receive support at a level equivalent to the maximum level of fees.

I would expect the commission to work with the Office for Fair Access, as well as seeking views from a range of other interests. The Government will consider any report before submitting any recommendation to the House on raising the upper limit of the tuition fee.

Work to establish baseline data for the review will begin in the 2004–05 academic year.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 27 January 2004

TRANSPORT

Highways Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson): The Highways Agency Annual Report and Accounts for 2002–03 has been laid before the House today under Section 7 of the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000. Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Disability and Carers Service

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith): I am today announcing that the disability and carers service (DCS), the organisation responsible for delivering disability and carers benefits within the Department for Work and Pensions, will be assigned formal executive agency status with a chief executive appointed by open competition.

The DCS is a substantial business, employing over 7,000 staff and paying out in excess of £11 billion a year in disability living allowance, attendance allowance and carers allowance to just under 4.5 million people. The customers are some of the most disadvantaged in society and the benefits require specialist assessment of care and mobility needs.

In April 2002, my Department established Jobcentre Plus and The Pension Service as executive agencies to provide services to people of working age and pensioners. However, extra cost disability and carers benefits continued to be administered by an organisation with non-executive status. Since 2002, without formal agency status, the DCS has made substantial improvements in the speed and quality of decision-making. The new agency will keep up the momentum, actively building on these achievements. Agency status will improve efficiency and customer service, allowing the organisation to agree clear goals with me and then having the clear accountability for delivery.

As work to set up the agency progresses, my Department will consult with groups representing disabled people to ensure that the new organisation is designed in a way that best suits the needs of its customers.

The process of establishing the agency and selection of the chief executive by open competition will now commence. I have not yet set a date for launching the agency. It is important to ensure smooth transition with the minimum disruption to business delivery. I am, however, confident that these changes will sharpen accountabilities and improve services significantly for the millions of disabled people and their carers receiving these benefits.

Northampton Borough Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the benefit fraud inspectorate (BFI) follow-up inspection report on Northampton Borough Council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper *"Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All"*, published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards for housing benefits allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

The BFI inspected Northampton Borough Council against the performances standards for housing benefits. The report finds that the council is not at standard for any of the seven functional areas of the performance standards—strategic management, customer services, processing of claims, working with landlords, internal security, counter-fraud, and overpayments.

However, the report finds that the council has made significant improvements in the areas of counter-fraud and working with landlords, since the first BFI inspection report published in April 2000. Weaknesses remain in claims processing and overpayment performance.

The council's management information is very limited across all areas of its benefits administration and as a result, there is little awareness of the issues affecting performance. In particular, the lack of effective management controls and checks in claims processing and the overpayment process has hampered the council's ability to improve claims processing and recover overpaid benefits.

There were significant backlogs of work, with new housing benefits claims taking an average of 62 days to clear compared with the national target of 36 days.

The report finds good practices in the council's benefits service including quality training of its fraud investigators, clearly set out benefit claim forms and good working relations with key stakeholders.

In 2002–03, Northampton Borough Council administered some £46.7 million in housing benefits, about 39 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Housing Benefit

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Chris Pond): The outcome of the consultation on housing benefit sanctions for anti-social behaviour was published today. An analysis of the responses has been placed in the Library and also a copy put on the DWP website at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2003/index.asp.

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a priority for the Government. It blights communities and can undermine the regeneration of the most disadvantaged areas, creating an environment where crime takes hold.

When my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions consulted on a housing benefit sanction between May and August 2003, he received 487 responses from a wide range of organisations and members of the public. One of the responses included a petition from the constituents of Paisley, South. If the signatories are counted as individual responses the final number of responses was 698. Everyone who responded agreed that anti-social behaviour must be stopped. Victims and local people in particular were supportive of the proposed measures, though concerns were expressed by a large number of respondents about whether the measures would be workable or effective.

In the light of these concerns, particularly from local authorities, who play a key role in preventing and dealing with anti-social behaviour and also both private and registered social landlords, we have decided not to proceed with a housing benefit sanction at this time.

There is already a wide range of tools to deal with the types of behaviour that makes people's daily lives a misery; for example, anti-social behaviour orders and acceptable behaviour contracts. The Government has recently strengthened these existing powers with further measures in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and new proposals in the Housing Bill currently before Parliament. On 14 October, the Home Office published an action plan "*Together: Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour*". This action plan will help improve the response to tackling anti-social behaviour. This includes funding for every area of England and Wales, a new "together" action line, website and academy to provide help and support to practitioners and a range of projects to tackle nuisance families, begging and environmental crime. We want to make full use of the range of powers available before introducing a new measure. But we do not rule out other means, in the future as we learn from experience and establish what works.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund

The Minister for Local Government, Regional Governance and Fire (Mr. Nick Raynsford): I have today announced the outcome of the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund launched on 20 August 2003.

We plan to pay grants totalling over £9.3 million over the period to March 2006 to support 66 local arson prevention initiatives throughout England and Wales. This demonstrates clearly the Government's commitment to tackling arson and doing more to prevent fires, as set out in the draft Fire and Rescue National Framework published on 11 December 2003. Our substantial investment in the efforts of the police and fire and rescue services, in partnership with others, will help to reduce the number of deliberate fires. The additional funding will also assist the Government's wider neighbourhood renewal plans and complements the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan launched by the Prime Minister in October 2003. Copies of a table summarising the payments we plan to make to local partnerships are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

DEFENCE

Race Equality Scheme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): In accordance with undertakings in its Race Equality Scheme, the Ministry of Defence has produced a progress report, a copy of which is being place today in the Library of the House. The report shows that across the Department and the Armed Forces we are continuing to build on past experience and initiatives to eradicate harassment and unlawful discrimination and to develop a more proactive approach to race relations as part of our diversity programme. Good progress has been made but we recognise that more needs to be done. The report describes the steps that the Ministry of Defence will be pursuing to further its vision.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 28 January 2004

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Cat and Dog Fur

The Minister for Trade and Investment (Mr. Mike O'Brien): On 17 July last year I made a written statement to the House, *Official Report* cols 79–80WS, on the issue of cat and dog fur. I asked interested parties to try within six months to produce hard evidence of the extent of imports of domestic cat and dog fur into the UK. I said that if such evidence could be produced, I would in principle, be prepared to support a ban on the import of these furs. If, after six months hard evidence had not been produced, the Government would not legislate until evidence is forthcoming.

The six month deadline has ended. The Government understands the ethical concerns about the alleged import of cat and dog fur and is therefore reporting back to both Houses on progress made over the last six months.

Our priority on this issue has always been, and remains, the need to establish the facts about the extent of this alleged trade and to act in a measured way. The Government has maintained regular contact with interested parties over the last six months. However, over this time, we have received only one alleged sample of domestic dog fur and no samples of domestic cat fur.

We have asked scientific experts at the former Laboratory of the Government Chemist (LGC Limited) to determine the reliability of mass spectrometry as a possible means of accurately distinguishing the furs of domestic cat and dogs from that of other animal species. Such a test is necessary to determine whether domestic cat and dog fur is being imported into the UK, to permit effective enforcement of the Trade Descriptions Act and that of any future legislation governing the import of these furs.

Known samples of fur from both domestic and wild species within the cat and dog families, fur from other animals and the alleged sample of domestic dog fur were sent for testing last year. Some of these samples were also tested in an altered state to replicate the effects of textile processing. Thirteen samples were tested in total, all of them were tested twice, further to the discovery that technical problems might have affected the initial results.

LGC Limited has confirmed that four of the thirteen samples were correctly identified in the initial testing and six out of thirteen were correctly identified in the subsequent testing. Less than half of the samples were therefore correctly identified, and probability ratios demonstrate that there is a high chance that these samples could in fact have come from another species. Given these results, LGC Limited has recommended that mass spectrometry is not yet currently sufficiently reliable as a means of identifying domestic cat and dog fur from the fur of other animal species.

I have placed copies of LGC Limited's report in the Library of the House.

Whilst these results are very disappointing, there is some evidence that the reliability of mass spectrometry may improve as the database of known samples is built up and the software improves.

In my previous written statement, I made clear that, whilst the Government is prepared to take practical and proportionate action to address this matter, any action would be most effective if taken at EU level. There is stronger evidence that domestic cat and dog fur has been used in products found in some other EU countries. For this reason, we have been working hard over the last six months to raise the profile of this issue at EU level. In November last year, I publicly supported calls by the European Parliament for an EU ban on trade in cat and dog fur, whilst making clear that it was also essential to have in place a reliable scientific test to ensure effective enforcement. The UK has also, in the context of various EU meetings, either raised the issue of cat and dog fur or supported calls by other Member States for the European Commission to consider this issue further. We continue to be in regular contact with officials from other countries and from the Commission in order to share information and our approaches to this emotive issue.

In July I undertook to give support to a ban on the import of domestic cat and dog fur if clear evidence could be produced of the extent of this problem in the UK. This has not been achievable over the last six months, and as I made clear last summer, I cannot therefore support an import ban at this point in time. However, this Government will continue to encourage interested parties to provide evidence of the extent of this problem. I have also asked LGC Limited to submit new known samples of fur for testing in order to further analyse the reliability of mass spectrometry and we will continue to push for greater EU involvement on this issue.

I can assure you that this Government remains fully committed to establishing the facts about this issue and to taking proportionate and practical action. I therefore further undertake to report back to Parliament on progress made at the latest within twelve months and earlier if there are any substantive developments.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the benefit fraud inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Bury metropolitan borough council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "*Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All*", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards for housing benefits allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

The BFI inspected Bury metropolitan borough council against the performance standards for housing benefits. The report finds that the council is not at standard for any of the seven functional areas of the performance standards—strategic management, customer services, processing of claims, working with landlords, internal security, counter-fraud, and overpayments. However, the council is performing well in a significant number of elements of the standards.

The report finds that historically the council's benefit service has been given low priority within the council and performance overall has been mixed. While counter-fraud performance has been sound, performance in the processing of claims has been weak and there are significant arrears of work.

The report finds that since the comprehensive performance assessment result, announced in December 2002, the council has made progress across many areas of the performance standards.

The major challenge for the council is to significantly improve its benefits processing performance. This will be helped by a more systematic approach to planning, backed up by project disciplines and gathering management information.

In 2001–02, Bury metropolitan borough council administered some £31.3 million in housing benefits, about 15.5 per cent. of its total gross revenue expenditure.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

TREASURY

Double Taxation Convention (United Kingdom and France)

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): A new comprehensive double taxation convention with France (which will replace the existing agreement) was signed on 28 January 2004. After signature, both texts were deposited in the Library of the House and made available on the Inland Revenue's website. The text of the convention will be scheduled to a draft order in council and laid for consideration by the House in due course.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 29 January 2004

NORTHERN IRELAND

Alternatives to the Baton Round: Publication of Phase Four Report

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy): On 9 April 2003, I issued a press statement on the use of baton rounds in Northern Ireland. It contained the following paragraph:

> "On the basis that an acceptable and effective and less lethal alternative is available, the baton round would no longer be used after the end of 2003. In the event that that has not been achieved, the Government would report on the progress of the fourth phase of the research programme and review the options for less lethal alternatives consulting widely with a range of interested parties including the Chief Constable and the Policing Board".

I have today placed in the Library a copy of the report on the fourth phase of the research programme into alternative policing approaches towards the management of conflict.

A multi-agency steering group was set up in 2000, following publication of the Patten report on policing in Northern Ireland. Its purpose was to take forward the programme to establish whether an acceptable, effective and less potentially lethal alternative to the baton round is available and to review the public order equipment which is presently available or could be developed in order to expand the range of tactical options available to operational commanders.

As Patten envisaged, it has been a wide-ranging and substantial programme. I am grateful to many contributors, including the police, those in government service, academics and other experts, for their sustained commitment.

This fourth report of the steering group, that I have published today, concludes that there is as yet no commercially available product that meets the criteria of an acceptable and effective and less potentially lethal alternative.

The Government will continue to keep all commercial products and technological research under review. It will ensure that those appearing to have real potential are tested and medically evaluated if appropriate.

Against this background, the Government have concluded that it would be right to continue with the development of the attenuating energy and discriminating irritant projectiles (AEP and DIP) which represent the best opportunity to get an alternative to the L21 A1 into service as rapidly as possible. The progress made in their development is set out fully in the report. While significant challenges remain, it is projected that the attenuating energy projectile would be available by the end of 2004, ready for operational use before summer 2005. Its development also follows up one of the recommendations for research by the independent medical advisers in their evaluation of the existing baton round, a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House on 2 April 2001.

Work is also continuing on a second new projectile, the discriminating irritant projectiles. This is inevitably a longer-term project. It is by no means certain that it can be successfully achieved, although the signs are positive thus far.

We believe that there is real value in this combined programme, which has the potential to provide an acceptable, effective and less potentially lethal alternative to the current baton round. The Government intend to consult with a range of interested parties, including the Chief. Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

In publishing the report today, I am inviting comments on it from interested parties.

DEFENCE

Army Technical Foundation College

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): In my statement to the House on 27 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 35WS, I announced that I had approved in principle, and subject to full trades union consultation, plans by the Army Training and Recruiting Agency (ATRA) to close the Army Technical Foundation College (ATFC) at Arborfield, and transfer students to, principally, the Army Foundation College (AFC) at Harrogate, where a technical training stream will be introduced. There will be other changes to the way in which junior recruits are trained within the ATRA, but these do not envisage closures of any establishments.

I can now confirm that the consultation exercise has now been concluded and no serious objections have been raised to the proposal. I have therefore agreed that the closure plans may be implemented. Training at the College will therefore cease with effect from August of this year (the last students being accepted at the beginning of this month (January) and the College will close in March 2005.

The principal aim of this proposal is to improve the quality and efficiency of training provided to junior entrants to the technical trades. It will not affect the Army's commitment or ability to accept suitable junior applicants onto appropriate courses at either the AFC or other ATRA Junior Entry establishments. I do not anticipate that this will have any major impact on the Army's recruiting plans in general.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Isle of Wight Council (Benefit Fraud Inspection)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond: On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Isle of Wight Council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "*Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All*", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards for housing benefits allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

The BFI inspected Isle of Wight Council against the performance standards for housing benefits. The report finds that the council is not at standard for any of the seven functional areas of the performance standards—strategic management, customer services, processing of claims, working with landlords, internal security, counter-fraud, and overpayments.

Isle of Wight Council's performance on benefit administration was mixed. Verification of evidence to support new and renewal claims was generally completed to standard. However, delays in processing of claims, and in processing changes of circumstances, meant that performance was significantly below targets. New benefit claims were taking an average of 75 days to clear compared with the national target of 36 days. Overpayments were being allowed to continue because notified changes of circumstances were not being dealt with promptly.

A new benefits claim form based on the Department for Work and Pensions' national model was introduced from April 2003 which fully meets the requirements of the Standards.

The performance of the council's fraud investigation team was variable. The team appeared to take the majority of investigations through to their natural conclusion, but the action taken on cases and the reasons for decisions made were not adequately recorded.

Benefit overpayments were being recovered effectively from ongoing benefit, but the process for cases where benefit was no longer in payment was less effective.

In 2002–03, Isle of Wight council administered some £39.5 million in housing benefits, about 18 per cent. of its total gross revenue expenditure.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Work Programme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the benefit fraud inspectorate (BFI) has today announced its Phase 9 programme of activity for 2004–05.

The BFI is an independent unit within the Department for Work and Pensions that inspects and reports directly to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the standard of benefit administration and counter-fraud activity in local authorities and the Department's operations.

As part of its Phase 9 activity, the BFI will be undertaking shorter, targeted inspections focusing on the area of claims processing for housing benefits. The BFI will be selecting authorities that are taking 80 days or more to process housing benefits claims. Authorities will be selected on an on-going basis, depending on their quarterly management information returns to the Department for Work and Pensions.

Inspections on three other authorities—Breckland, Copeland, and Wyre—whose claims processing performance has improved significantly will be used to identify and disseminate good practice.

The BFI will be undertaking full inspections on 14 local authorities whose benefits administration has been identified as poor or fair in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment programme. Authorities whose assessment results have already been announced include Allerdale, Broxtowe, Hart, North Norfolk, Rossendale, Rutland, Torridge, and West Berkshire.

Full inspections on two other authorities—Herefordshire and Rotherham—who have shown significant improvements in their benefits administration during the comprehensive performance assessment programme will be used to identify and disseminate good practice.

The BFI will also be undertaking full inspections on Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil councils whose benefits service performance has been identified as at risk during the Wales programme for improvement.

The BFI will also be undertaking follow-up inspections on authorities to assess progress made since earlier BFI inspections.

Working with the Audit Commission, the BFI will continue to undertake the comprehensive performance assessments programme, undertaking assessments on 30 district authorities and re-assessing the performance of 116 single-tier authorities.

Working with Audit Scotland and the Audit Commission in Wales, BFI will continue its involvement in the Scottish best value programme and the Wales programme for improvement.

The BFI will also continue to offer practical support and advice to local authorities as part of its successful performance improvement action team, a service that has proved both popular and effective in improving performance in benefits administration. Demand for this service continues to increase.

Subject to further discussions, the BFI will be undertaking a specialist inspection on local authorities' compliance with disability discrimination Acts, and four specialist inspections on the business of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 30 January 2004

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Grant Report (England and Wales 2004–05)

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I have today placed in the Library a copy of the Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2004–05 (HC 277). The report sets out my determination for 2004–05 of the aggregate amount of grants that I propose to pay under section 46(2) of the Police Act 1996, and the amount to be paid to each police authority and to the Greater London Authority for the Metropolitan Police Authority.

Allocations for each police authority for financial years 2003–04 and 2004–05 are set out in the table:

Police Authority	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*% Change*
	Allocation[1] *£m*	*Allocation*[1] *£m*	
English Shire forces			
Avon & Somerset	157.1	162.2	3.3%
Bedfordshire	60.1	62.1	3.3%
Cambridgeshire	71.1	73.4	3.3%
Cheshire	103.9	107.2	3.3%
Cleveland	84.1	86.8	3.3%
Cumbria	57.7	59.6	3.3%
Derbyshire	97.9	101.2	3.3%
Devon & Cornwall	161.5	166.7	3.3%
Dorset	61.6	63.6	3.3%
Durham	81.5	84.2	3.3%
Essex	155.9	160.9	3.3%
Gloucestershire	57.0	58.9	3.3%
Hampshire	184.5	190.5	3.3%
Hertfordshire	101.5	104.8	3.3%
Humberside	110.9	114.6	3.3%
Kent	176.8	182.6	3.3%
Lancashire	177.1	182.9	3.3%
Leicestershire	98.8	102.0	3.3%
Lincolnshire	58.7	60.6	3.3%
Norfolk	79.6	82.2	3.3%
North Yorkshire	70.4	72.7	3.3%
Northamptonshire	62.2	64.3	3.3%
Nottinghamshire	123.6	127.6	3.3%
Staffordshire	105.8	109.2	3.3%
Suffolk	63.9	66.0	3.3%
Surrey	85.4	88.2	3.3%
Sussex	153.1	158.1	3.3%
Thames Valley	205.9	212.6	3.3%
Warwickshire	48.2	49.8	3.3%
West Mercia	104.4	107.7	3.3%
Wiltshire	58.7	60.6	3.3%
English Metropolitan forces			
Greater Manchester	380.8	393.2	3.3%
Merseyside	240.5	248.4	3.3%
Northumbria	214.3	221.4	3.3%
South Yorkshire	172.3	178.0	3.3%
West Midlands	386.5	399.3	3.3%
West Yorkshire	289.4	298.9	3.3%
London forces			
GLA—Police	1,764.1	1,822.0	3.3%
City of London [2]	32.5	32.7	N/A
English Total	6,699.2	6,917.7	3.3%
Welsh forces			
Dyfed-Powys	49.3	50.9	3.3%
Gwent	69.6	71.8	3.3%
North Wales[3]	73.3	75.8	3.3%
South Wales	162.9	168.2	3.3%
Welsh Total	355.1	366.7	3.3%
TOTAL	7,054.3	7,284.4	3.3%

Notes

1. Rounded to the nearest £100,000. Grant as calculated under the Local Government Finance Report (England) and Local Government Finance (Police) Report (Wales). This includes the Metropolitan Police special payment, and the effects of floors and ceilings.

2. Figures for the City relate to Home Office Grant only as calculated in the Police Grant Report (England and Wales). Revenue Support Grant is allocated to the Common Council of the City of London as a whole in respect of all its functions. The City is grouped with education authorities for the purposes of floors and ceilings.

3. Welsh Assembly Grant includes PFI payments in RSG funding. PFI payments will be made good to ensure equivalent treatment with English forces.

Firearms Consultative Committee

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Caroline Flint): The Home Secretary has decided not to further extend the life of the Firearms Consultative Committee, which will cease to exist on 31 January. The Committee was originally set up for a period of five years from 1 February 1989 under section 22 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988. A total of four orders were subsequently made to allow for its continued existence as provided for by section 22(8).

Since it was established the Committee has made eleven reports and the Home Secretary is grateful for the close scrutiny it has given to a whole range of difficult and complex issues. The Government are anxious to maintain a forum for consultation but would wish to do so on a broader basis than allowed by the existing statutory framework. Urgent consideration will be given to setting up a new consultative structure, possibly on the basis of a two-tier structure to look at detailed technical matters and the operation of firearms controls in the round.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning Obligations Policy

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): On 6 November 2003 the Government published a

consultation document setting out their proposals for the reform of planning obligations policy. The Government have also made amendments to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill 2004 to facilitate their proposal to introduce an optional planning charge. The Government are today publishing a statement on the reform proposals and on Monday 2 February will also publish a summary of the responses received to the consultation. A copy of the Government's statement has today been placed in the Library of the House and is also available on the ODPM's website at www.odpm.gov.uk

Local Government Finance Settlement 2004–05

The Minister for Local Government, Regional Governance and Fire (Mr. Nick Raynsford): Yesterday I laid before the House the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2004–05. This report establishes the amounts of revenue support grant (RSG) and non-domestic rates (NDR) to be paid to local authorities in 2004–05, and the basis of their distribution. A draft of this report was issued for consultation on 19 November 2003. A revised draft was also issued on 11 December, following the announcement in the Chancellor's pre-Budget report of additional money for local authorities.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received a total of 454 written representations within the consultation deadlines from the Local Government Association and the Association of London Government, from local authorities, local authority groups and hon. Members. ODPM Ministers met with delegations from six local authority associations and representative groups to discuss the proposals.

Having considered the views of the local authority associations and others who have commented on the provisional settlement, I have decided to confirm my proposals on the bases of distribution.

The final figures published today reflect the more accurate data and resource totals that have become available since we published our proposals, and also appropriate data corrections to reflect errors discovered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or notified to us by local authorities.

This year's settlement provides another good increase in grant for local authorities. As last year, every local authority has been given a grant increase above the rate of inflation on a like for like basis. With this increase, we expect councils to continue to be able to provide good services while setting reasonable council tax increases. To this end, we have made an extra £640 million available for non-schools services in 2004–05. This is additional to the money allocated under the last spending review, and brings the total increase in money from Government to local councils to 30 per cent. since 1997 in real terms.

I shall be sending copies of this report to all local authorities, and making available full supporting information on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0405/grant.htm

I have placed copies of the report in the Journal Office; and copies of the report, tables showing each authority's formula spending shares and its allocation of RSG and NDR, and other supporting material are available in the Vote Office, the Printed Paper Office and the Libraries of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Export Licence Application

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): Following consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Trade and Industry recently approved a further licence to export military list goods to Iraq. The arms embargo against Iraq remains in place under United Nations Security Council resolution 1483 (2003), with the exception of

"arms and other related material required by the Coalition Provisional Authority to serve the purposes of this and other related resolutions".

Accordingly, Her Majesty's Government consider it appropriate to grant exemptions for the export of riot shields which are to be used by Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) peacekeeping forces in Iraq. The export is consistent with the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria. Future applications will continue to be assessed on a case by case basis against the UN embargo and consolidated criteria, taking into account the circumstances prevailing at the time.

DEFENCE

Colchester PFI Announcement

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): There has been considerable interest in the House in the plans to redevelop the Colchester Garrison living and working accommodation. Detailed negotiations are taking place, and I intend to make an announcement to the House shortly.

Defence 2004

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): On 1 September 2003 I informed the House that the Defence 2003 exhibition, under the leadership of the Royal Air force, which was scheduled to take place at the Royal International Air Tattoo, had been postponed by 12 months because of operational pressures, *Official Report*, columns 913–14W. In light of the continued high level of operational commitments and the associated demands upon service personnel and their families, the Ministry of Defence has now concluded that Defence 2004 should not take place. However, the services will continue to fully support the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) which will take place in July at RAF Fairford, including support for a Youth Day, an Armed Forces Careers Convention, and commemorations of Entente Cordiale and the D-Day anniversary. Over the coming months we will be working closely with the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund Enterprises who organise the event, to help ensure that RIAT continues its tradition of great success.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy: Second Annual Report

The Minister for Children (Margaret Hodge): Today, 30 January 2004, the Government published their response to the second annual report of independent advisory group on teenage pregnancy.

In their report, the independent advisory group raised a number of issues for the Government's consideration and made eight recommendations. We have carefully considered and responded specifically to the recommendations put forward by the independent advisory group in their second annual report.

We continue to make good progress in implementing the teenage pregnancy strategy, which remains a Government priority. We welcome the early signs that our long-term sustained efforts to reduce the rates of teenage pregnancy are working. This includes a 10 per cent. reduction in conception rates in under 18s and an 11 per cent. reduction among under 16s since 1998.

The strategy draws on the best available research evidence of what works. This is a multi-faceted approach with a range of measures to help young people resist pressure to have early sex, to improve sex and relationship education, to support parents in talking to their children about sex and relationship issues, to improve young people's access to contraceptive advice and to support teenage parents in participating in education, training and employment.

The strategy is very much in tune with the vision of the Green Paper, "Every Child Matters", which provides our vision of how to help every child and young person fulfil their potential.

The Government welcome the recommendations made in the independent advisory group's second annual report and acknowledge the valuable contribution the group makes to the strategy and its implementation.

Our response recognises that in order to sustain the success of the strategy we cannot give way to complacency. There are still many lessons to be learnt and much to do to reach our goal and help young people reach theirs.

A copy of the Government's response has been placed in the Libraries.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 2 February 2004

TREASURY

Child Trust Fund

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly): The Child Trust Funds Bill will ensure that every child, whatever their family background, will have access at the age of 18 when they begin their adult life to a stock of assets which they can invest in their future. The child trust fund will also help children and their parents to understand the benefits of saving and investment and how to engage with financial institutions.

The Government are today publishing draft child trust fund regulations. These draft regulations will be of particular interest to potential providers of the child trust fund.

The draft regulations include the requirements for a stakeholder child trust fund account. Every child trust fund provider will make a stakeholder account available as one of the investment options. A stakeholder child trust fund account will have its charges capped at 1.5 per cent. per year, and providers will be required to accept all contributions of £10 and above. No charges will apply to transfers between different types of accounts, including from stakeholder to non-stakeholder, and between providers.

The Government's decision on the charge cap is in the best interests of consumers, as it encourages as wide a selection of providers as possible to offer child trust fund accounts. A large number of providers will encourage competition and ensure the best value for consumers. The Government will continue to monitor that the level of the charge cap best meets the interests of consumers.

The decision was evidence-based and considered the particular characteristics of the child trust fund. The economics of the child trust fund are very different to other financial products, such as the stakeholder pensions. In particular child trust fund accounts will be smaller in terms of the average size of funds compared to pensions and will have a lower minimum contribution level than other stakeholder products.

The evidence on which the decision for the cap was based included the report commissioned by the Government from Deloitte, which looked at the trade-offs of different charge caps for providers and consumers. Deloitte's report will be published later this year, at the same time as their report on the other products in the stakeholder suite.

The minimum contribution for the stakeholder account has been set to ensure the child trust fund is accessible to all savers, including those who cannot commit to regular contributions. Providers will be free to accept lower contributions if they wish and it is expected that competition amongst providers could drive down the minimum amounts accepted.

The Government will continue to work with the Financial Services Authority on the development of an appropriate regulatory regime.

Copies of the draft regulations together with an explanatory commentary are available in the Vote Office and the Libraries of the House.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Criminal Defence Service Cuts

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): I am today announcing that the Government intend to implement a package of measures which will help achieve better value for money in the Criminal Defence Service (formerly Criminal Legal Aid) while ensuring that help continues to go to those who need it most.

The package draws upon proposals contained in the consultation paper on the Criminal Defence Service (CDS) "Delivering Value for Money in the Criminal Defence Service", which was published last year. After considering the responses to the consultation we intend to introduce the following changes to the CDS:

Strengthening the operation of Recovery of Defence Costs Orders (RDCOs);

Abolishing advocacy assistance for early hearings;

Restricting the scope of the court duty solicitor scheme to remove access for clients who are not in custody and who are charged with non-imprisonable offences;

Abolish post-charge advice and assistance in criminal proceedings (except that provided by the court duty solicitor);

Limiting the provision of free police station advice in certain cases to telephone advice only (with limited exceptions).

I believe that these changes strike the right balance between ensuring the taxpayer receives good value for money and ensuring that publicly funded legal aid is available to those who need it most. We will of course keep the impact of these proposals under review.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Making it Happen: The Northern Way

The First Secretary of State and Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott): I have published today a second progress report on the £22 billion sustainable communities plan, titled "*Making it Happen: The Northern Way*". It looks at the successes since the communities plan was published in February 2003, and at the challenges still to come. This follows on from the first statement, published in July 2003 on the Thames gateway and the growth areas.

The statement reports on the action being taken to regenerate our established urban and rural communities in the north and the midlands. It recognises the new confidence and energy that can be found in many of our northern and midland towns and cities, and seeks to build on this.

We recognise that establishing sustainable communities in the North is as much about economic growth and employment as it is in the rest of the country. The statement makes clear that the north needs

a long-term vision to exploit fully the economic and transport corridors connecting it—a "Northern Way", which looks east to west as well as north to south.

This idea of a northern way—a bold vision that exploits the economic and transport corridors that bind the north—is an example of the new ways of thinking that we need to tap the potential of the north.

We are convinced of the potential for an economic renaissance in the north, and we have pledged to work with the RDAs and the regional planning bodies to develop this vision, together with other key partners. This is alongside the other work that the Government is already doing to improve the relative economic performance of the north.

The report I am launching today offers a vision for renewal and growth that will bring the jobs, investment and renewed housing that can create truly sustainable communities across the northern regions.

We are working to revive communities, renew the homes and rebuild the streets in the areas most affected by abandonment and decay. I am announcing today that the Merseyside market renewal pathfinder will receive £86 million and that NewcastleGateshead market renewal pathfinder will receive £69 million until March 2006 to help tackle the terrible problems caused by low demand. This is in addition to an allocation of £4 million each for an early action programme.

By March 2006, Merseyside expects to deliver: the demolition of over 2,700 redundant and obsolete homes, the refurbishment of 325 homes, over 1,600 new homes built and the widespread delivery of additional management measures designed to overcome the problems of low demand.

By March 2006, NewcastleGateshead expects to deliver: the demolition of almost 2,000 redundant and obsolete properties, 100 new homes built, over 2,000 homes refurbished, and around seven hectares of land acquired for potential later development

Other announcements today include:

27 pilot areas have been identified to receive a share of the £89 million Liveability Fund, and these are listed in the progress report. This will help them develop innovative models for delivering a high quality local environment.

We are creating a sixteenth Urban Regeneration Company in Gloucester. Initial targets are to provide 3,000 new homes and 2,000 new jobs and to attract up to £400 million of private sector investment over 10 years.

We are also providing funding to support the creation of a Regional Centre of Excellence in every region. These will be used to improve the skills of people involved in the delivery of sustainable communities.

We will be holding a "Creating Sustainable Communities Summit" in Manchester at the start of 2005, following on from the successful Urban Summit in 2002.

The statement includes examples of the excellent work being done by our delivery partners—such as local authorities, English Partnerships, the regional development agencies, the Housing Corporation and urban regeneration companies—and of how we can work together in future to deliver a step change in sustainable communities.

I am also publishing today nine regional annexes, providing short progress reports on the delivery of the sustainable communities plan in each English region.

Copies of "*Making it Happen: The Northern Way*" and the regional annexes have been sent to all English Members. Further copies of the report and annexes are available in the Libraries of both Houses, and on the website of The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at: www.odpm.gov.uk/communities.

London-Stansted-Cambridge Growth Area

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): I am today announcing the extension of the London-Stansted-Cambridge growth area to include Peterborough, and all of Cambridgeshire.

This takes account of the important role and potential of Peterborough in contributing to growth as part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge growth area, and the work of the Regional Planning Panel for the East of England in preparing new Regional Planning Guidance.

It also reflects the important work under way on sustainable housing growth across Cambridgeshire, and particularly through the Cambridge Sub Region Infrastructure Partnership, which includes Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

The complete list of local authorities now included in the London-Stansted-Cambridge growth area is:

Braintree
Broxbourne
Cambridge
East Cambridgeshire
East Hertfordshire
Enfield
Epping Forest
Fenland
Hackney
Haringey
Harlow
Huntingdonshire
North Hertfordshire
Peterborough
Redbridge
South Cambridgeshire
Stevenage
Uttlesford
Waltham Forest

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HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Accommodation Centres

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes): Following a careful and detailed assessment of HMS Daedalus in Gosport as a potential accommodation centre for asylum seekers, we have concluded that the difficulties associated with the conversion of historic buildings and the creation of a suitable access point into the site mean that we will no longer be pursuing this site for the purposes of the trial. I can confirm that we will not be proceeding with a planning notification for this site.

It remains our intention to include within the trial of accommodation centres at least one centre which is smaller than the 750 bed model, and is located in, or near, an urban area. We are still in discussions with the Refugee Council about the core and cluster model proposed by them. We will not be putting details of potential sites into the public domain unless and until they appear to be a good prospect for the siting of an accommodation centre.

DEFENCE

Reserve Forces

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): We are making an important administrative change to the recruitment and re-engagement procedures for the volunteer reserve forces. From 1 April this year, new recruits to the volunteer reserve forces and applicants for re-engagement will be required to agree to their unit contacting their employer about their membership. The purpose of contacting employers is to ensure that they are aware of those employees who are members of the volunteer reserve forces and also to provide information about training and call-out liabilities.

As a safeguard, reservists will have a right to submit cases to their commanding officers if they believe that they have particular reasons for not having their membership of the volunteer reserve forces disclosed. Cases will be considered on their merits.

This change to our administrative procedures will enable employers to be in a better position to plan for the absence of employees who are reservists and also to be better informed about their rights and obligations. It builds on our policy of recognising that the effectiveness of the reserves ultimately depends on a three-way relationship between the Ministry of Defence, the reservists themselves and their employers.

Colchester Garrison PFI

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I am very pleased to announce to the House that the Ministry of Defence has reached agreement with RMPA Services plc to redevelop and operate Colchester garrison. This PFI contract will provide effective services to the army for 35 years and is worth approximately £2 billion through the life of the project.

This is an arrangement which is beneficial to both parties and we shall shortly see work on the new barracks starting on the ground. The result will be a fully serviced and modern garrison for a modern army with living and working accommodation that is amongst the best, demonstrating our commitment to providing our armed forces with facilities that are up to date and appropriate for the 21st century. I expect approximately 190 civil service posts to transfer to the contractor and these will be handled in accordance with existing legislation. We do not envisage any redundancies arising out of this transfer.

Armed Forces Pension Scheme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): Further to my answer to the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr Howarth), *Official Report*, 21 January 2004, column 1244W, the proposals set out in the Treasury and Inland Revenue document "*Simplifying the taxation of pensions: the Government's proposals*", published on 10 December 2003, would allow all such pension guarantee lump sum payments to continue to be paid free of income tax, subject to the proposed £1.4 million lifetime allowance.

The original answer was incorrect following advice from officials across Government, and I unreservedly apologise for this inaccurate answer.

The new armed forces pension scheme currently in Committee stage will in the event of the member's death, be able to pay both death-in-service lump sums of the type already paid under existing pension arrangements and the new pension guarantee lump sums applicable in cases of death in retirement, without any income tax charge. So, subject to the £1.4 million allowance, the rate will not be 35 per cent. but zero.

I have today written to the hon. Member for Aldershot enclosing a copy of this statement.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Energy White Paper Annual Report

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): The Energy White Paper first annual report will be published shortly after the Easter recess. This will allow the Government to report on a full year from the launch of the White Paper in February 2003, as we are legally required to do by the Sustainable Energy Act 2003, as well as to capture some key energy statistics for the relevant period. Given the importance of energy efficiency to delivery of the Energy White Paper objectives, the Government intend to publish the energy efficiency implementation plan at the same time as the

Annual Report. The Government also envisage simultaneous publication of the fuel poverty strategy implementation plan and the CHP strategy.

HEALTH

Foundation Trusts

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton): I have been informed by the chairman of the independent regulator of National Health Service foundation trusts that applications for the first wave of NHS foundation trust status will be considered in two groups. This reflects the complexity of a number of applicants and the rigorous approach to assessment that the regulator is adopting.

Subject to assessment criteria being met, the first group will be considered for authorisation from 1 April 2004 and the second group of 12 from 1 July 2004.

The first group of 12 are:

- Basildon & Thurrock General Hospitals NHS Trust
- Bradford Hospitals NHS Trust
- Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Trust
- Doncaster & Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Trust
- Homerton University Hospital NHS Trust
- Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust
- North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust
- Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust
- Rotherham General Hospitals NHS Trust
- Royal Devon & Exeter Health Care NHS Trust
- Stockport NHS Trust
- The Royal Marsden NHS Trust

The second group are:

- Addenbrooke's NHS Trust
- Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Trust
- City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust
- Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust
- Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust
- King's College Hospital NHS Trust
- Papworth Hospital NHS Trust
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Southern Derbyshire Acute Hospital Services NHS Trust
- The Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Trust
- University College London Hospitals NHS Trust
- University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Israel's Fence

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): On 8 December 2003 the UN General Assembly in Resolution ES-10/14 requested the International Court of Justice to render urgently an advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the construction of the wall being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In response to the request, the International Court of Justice has invited UN Member States, Palestine and certain international organisations to contribute written and/or oral statements to the court if they wish to do so. On 30 January the UK submitted a national written statement to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

As I have repeatedly made clear, here and elsewhere, the UK considers the building by Israel of a fence, or wall, in the West Bank to be unlawful. The UK's written statement submitted to the court recalls that we voted in favour of UN General Assembly Resolution ES-10/13, adopted on 21 October 2003, which demands that Israel stop and reverse construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. I regret that Israel has not complied with the General Assembly's demand. We recognise Israel's legitimate security concerns. The latest, horrifying suicide bombing in Jerusalem on 29 January only too clearly shows the continuing threat faced by Israel from terrorists, but building the fence on occupied land only complicates efforts to make progress towards a comprehensive peace settlement.

Despite our view on the illegalities of the fence, we argued against this question being referred to the International Court of Justice. This approach is one shared by all members of the European Union including all accession states. This is being communicated by the Irish Presidency to the court. The UK has also submitted a detailed written statement to the court arguing that the court ought to exercise its discretion to decline to give an opinion. Our arguments are about the use of the court's advisory jurisdiction. We believe that it is inappropriate to embroil the court in a heavily political bilateral dispute. We also believe the court should not be engaged where the consent of both parties has not been given. An opinion is not necessary to assist the General Assembly in reaching a view on the fence. Nor, in the absence of participation from one side, will the court have all the facts before it.

Submissions to the International Court of Justice are confidential until the court decides to make them public. We expect the court will make the written statements submitted to it public at the start of the oral proceedings, due to begin on 23 February. At that stage, I will place a copy in the Library of the House.

TREASURY

Census 2001

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly): The 2001 Census National Report (part 2) for England and Wales is being published and laid before Parliament today by the Office for National Statistics. Copies are available in the Libraries of both Houses. The report is also available on the National Statistics website.

This follows the publication of the National Report (part 1) in May 2003. These two documents are prepared under section 4(1) of the Census Act 1920.

The printed National Report (part 2) contains tables on migration and on travel-to-work and workplace populations as well as new tables on members of the Armed Forces and on same-sex couples. The report is accompanied by a CD that includes all tables contained in either part of the National Report at regional and local authority level. Copies are being provided free of charge to all local authorities.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Working and Saving

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith): The proposals we are publishing today are the next part of the Government's strategy for private and occupational pensions as set out in the pensions Green Paper.

Informed Choices for Working and Saving (Cm 6111) takes forward a central element of the pensions agenda and sets out our strategy for empowering individuals to make real and informed choices on working and saving for their retirement.

The Government's strategy is based around three steps—activation, education and information. We are determined:

to enable people to make the most of pension provision and encourage availability of the right pension products;

to raise people's awareness of their options and improve financial education; and

to ensure that everyone has high-quality, accurate and timely information.

We in Government want to build on our partnership working with employers, individuals, the financial services industry, trade unions and the voluntary sector who all have a part to play taking this agenda forward.

Our Informed Choice strategy is only one part of our wider pension reform programme. Alongside Informed Choice the forthcoming Pensions Bill will take forward measures that bolster security for scheme members while also making it easier, simpler and more flexible for employers and employees to contribute to pensions.

Benefit Fraud Inspection (Portsmouth City Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the benefit fraud inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Portsmouth city council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "*Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All*", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards for housing benefits' allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

The BFI inspected Portsmouth city council against the performance standards for housing benefits. The report finds that the council is not at standard for any of the seven functional areas of the standards.

There were some significant strengths in strategic management, customer services, processing of claims, internal security and working with landlords. However, in the areas of counter-fraud and overpayments, the council has much to do to improve its performance.

Although not at standard for customer services, the council delivers a comprehensive range of customer services throughout eight area housing offices, and the work in encouraging take-up of benefits through the access point initiative was particularly commendable. The council also produced comprehensive and well-documented procedures for selecting suitable landlords. New benefit claims were taking an average of 38 days to clear compared with the national target of 36 days.

Portsmouth city council needed to improve its counter-fraud work by revising its prosecution policy, developing procedures for counter-fraud officers and improving its management of investigations.

The council could not accurately report performance for benefit overpayments, and the areas of decisions, calculations and recovery of overpayments needed to be critically addressed.

In 2002–03, Portsmouth City Council administered some £61 million in housing benefits, about 14.6 per cent. of its total gross revenue expenditure.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

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TRANSPORT

Bus Quality Contracts

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty): The Department for Transport will shortly be taking steps to improve the potential effectiveness of the quality contracts provisions in the Transport Act 2000.

The Act requires each local transport authority, after consultation with local bus operators and other stakeholders, to prepare a bus strategy to ensure that bus services meet the transport needs of local people and are of an appropriate standard. These strategies are translating into excellent practical results in some areas, with improved services and waiting facilities and increased ridership. In these places passengers are getting a better deal through local authorities and bus operators working creatively together.

The Act provides various ways in which local transport authorities can more effectively influence local bus services—statutory quality partnership schemes, ticketing schemes and information strategies. We want local authorities to make full use of these powers. We are pleased that the first statutory quality partnership is to be launched shortly, and we hope to see more of these. Statutory quality partnerships are an essential element of our vision for buses in the context of an integrated transport approach.

The Act also enables local authorities to make quality contract (or "QC") schemes where such a scheme is the only practical way for an authority to implement the policies in its bus strategy, and would do so in a way which is economic, efficient and effective.

All proposed QC schemes need to be submitted to the Department for approval. Approval may be given if a scheme meets the criteria set out in the Act and is in the public interest. Although the provision has been in force since October 2001, no such schemes have been submitted to date. However, the provision is there to be used where the circumstances justify it.

Some local transport authorities believe that they might meet the criteria for making a QC scheme but have been deterred by the length of time which the process will take. A particular issue is the 21-month minimum period which must elapse between the making of the scheme (after it has been approved) and its coming into force.

I am persuaded that, where a local bus strategy cannot otherwise be delivered, 21 months may be too long in certain circumstances for passengers to wait for improvements. The Department will be issuing a consultation document shortly to give the bus industry, local authorities and other stakeholders an opportunity to express their views on the implications of reducing the 21 months to a shorter minimum period, in the range 6–15 months.

Some local transport authorities have requested guidance from the Department on the procedure to be followed in making an application, the supporting evidence required and the matters that will be taken into account in deciding whether to approve an application, including appraisal of the public interest. I have decided therefore that, in the interest of transparency, the Department should publish guidance on these matters that is available to all. The Department will shortly consult the main stakeholders on a draft guidance document before publishing it in its definitive form.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Wokingham District Council (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Report)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) inspection report on Wokingham District Council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The "performance standards for housing benefits" allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

The BFI inspected Wokingham District Council against the performance standards for housing benefits. The report finds that the council is not at standard for any of the seven functional areas of the standards—strategic management, customer services, processing of claims, working with landlords, internal security, counter-fraud, and overpayments.

The report acknowledges the problems and challenges faced by the council since July 2002, when it brought its benefits service back in-house following a period of outsourcing.

The report finds that the council's management information was limited, and where information was being produced, its importance was not being considered. Performance in key areas was not being effectively reported or monitored. This was compounded by a very limited management-checking regime, which meant that the council could not provide any assurances about the quality and accuracy of benefits payments being made.

The process of gathering evidence to support benefits claims was generally good, but the speed of processing claims was poor. The report notes concern about the possible impact that unreasonable delays were having on existing and potential customers.

The council's fraud investigations were generally effective and procedures were in place to consider the most appropriate sanction to apply. However, a lack of active management for administration work resulted in unreasonable time delays, which in turn affected the council's ability to prosecute fraudsters. Effective debt recovery on overpayments was similarly being hampered by slow decision making.

In 2002–03, Wokingham District Council administered some £13.1 million in housing benefits, about 8.4 per cent of its total gross revenue expenditure.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BBC News 24

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): On 5 December 2002 I placed the independent review of BBC News 24 by Richard Lambert in the Libraries of both Houses, together with a letter setting out my response.

In response to the review, I attached two further conditions to the approvals of BBC News 24. These required the Governors to publish their response to the Lambert report by the end of March 2003, and to promulgate revised commitments for the service, taking account of Richard Lambert's recommendations, by the end of May 2003.

In addition, I was minded to attach a third condition requiring the Governors to report more fully on the delivery of News 24 in the BBC's annual reports. I stated that I would reconsider the intention in the light of the BBC's formal response and subsequent 2003 annual report.

I have judged that these two documents provide enough information and demonstrate sufficient improvements to remove the need for a further condition on the approval.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Advisory Group Enforcement Delivery Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): The fourth and final report by the Lord Chancellor's advisory group on enforcement service delivery, entitled: "The move to a regulated enforcement industry: transitional issues", has been published in November 2003 and copies placed in the Libraries of both Houses. I am pleased to announce that the advisory group has now fulfilled its original terms of reference. The group is therefore disbanded. I am grateful for valuable contribution provided by the members of the advisory group, throughout the four reports to my Department. Proposals for legislation will follow in due course.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Development Agencies

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Jacqui Smith): I have published the regional development agencies' reported mid-year tier three outputs as at the end of quarter two, 2003–04, which suggest all RDAs are on track to meet the annual targets set in their corporate plans.

The figures cover the creation and safeguarding of jobs, the amount of brownfield land brought back into use, the number of businesses added to the regional economies, the number of learning opportunities created and the amount of private sector investment attracted benefiting deprived areas, all as a result of RDA activity.

Press releases on the results have been issued in each region. Copies of these and the mid-year output results have been placed in the Libraries of the House. The results have also been placed on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/rda/info.

TREASURY

Invest to Save Budget: Round 6

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Paul Boateng): I am pleased to announce that 13 bids from across the public and voluntary sectors have been successful in round six of the Invest to Save Budget at a cost of £46 million in total over the three years to 2006–07 for England. The allocated sum rises to £51 million to include consequential funding for the devolved Administrations. The attached table describes the winners of this round.

The Invest to Save Budget (ISB) is a joint Treasury/ Cabinet Office initiative. It provides support for projects which increase the extent of joint working between different parts of government, identify innovative ways of delivering public services and reduce the cost of delivering the services and/or improve the quality and effectiveness of services delivered to the public. This is the sixth round of the ISB which started in 1999.

It is expected that a total of around £370 million will be spent on ISB projects over the period from 1 April 1999 to 31 March 2006. Round one was restricted to central Government Departments and their agencies. In the second and third rounds local authorities, police and fire authorities, health authorities, non-departmental public bodies and public corporations could also apply. In the fourth round, voluntary sector bodies were able to apply for the first time. The fifth round built on the partnership theme and encouraged the risk adverse public sector to innovate. The sixth round continues to seek out projects to improve delivery of public services through innovation and partnership working.

Winning projects have to agree an implementation plan with the sponsor departments. Each project has to provide six-monthly progress reports and carry out an evaluation of its success once it has been completed. Wider dissemination of the good practice from completed projects is then fed back into the whole spectrum of public service providers.

Organisation	*Brief Description*	*Funding Amount*	*Region*
1. Crown Prosecution Service	Crown Prosecution Service led project to deliver, for the first time, a truly joined up partnership approach to provide care for victims and witnesses.	£27,123,000	England & Wales
2. Small Business Service	Project to develop an on-line facility for Government Departments to reduce barriers to effective competition for public sector contracts and for improving value for money in public sector procurement.	£1,250,000	National
3. Youth Justice Board	Project to address the risk factors associated with offending children so helping to reduce the number of children entering the Criminal Justice system	£1,365,000	England & Wales
4. Community Service Volunteers	Project to reduce the demand for specialist mental health services across London and to create a greater understanding of mental health issues in the broad population	£7,331,000	London
5. St Mungo's Inner London Detox Centre	Project to provide a detoxification centre in Central London to offer an alternative to police custody for homeless street drinkers arrested by the Metropolitan Police	£1,155,000	London
6. Prison Service	Prison Service led project to deliver support for families and specifically children who have a parent in custody.	£314,687	South West
7. Devon & Cornwall Constabulary	Project that establishes a Targeted Drug release programme which will provide access for drug using offenders to pass from the criminal justice system to the treatment system when released from prison.	£1,100,000	South West
8. Bath and Somerset Social Services and Housing Services	Project that establishes a dedicated mobile nursing team providing 24-hour cover designed to take services in a residential location rather than moving a seriously frail person to hospital.	£1,343,300	South West
9. Bristol City Council	Project to reduce out of authority placements for children with complex mental health, emotional and behavioural difficulties to reduce alienation from their communities and increase their life chances	£810,870	South West
10. Warrington Advice and Resource Centre	Project to reduce the number of young people running away in Warrington by providing reactive services as well as proactively engaging with families to reduce repeat runaways and preventing siblings duplicating the behaviour.	£458,064	North West
11. Gloucestershire City Council	Project to develop and deliver a Local Planning toolkit for public service providers and partnerships to plan their neighbourhood and community services using shared information across the different agencies	£100,000	West Midlands
12. Lincolnshire County Council	Project to educate local people in Rural and Coastal Academies by the development of an integrated curriculum provision to pupils who are out of mainstream school; and an area based identification, screening and support service for adults with dyslexia.	£1,092,000	East Midlands
13. Peterborough City Council	Project to create an integrated network of service providers, statutory agencies and support workers, which will ensure the successful integration of new arrivals into Peterborough in the short, medium and long term.	£2,262,400	East Midlands

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Rosepark Nursing Home Fire

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Phil Hope): First, may I say that our thoughts are with the families and friends of the victims of this tragedy?

It is too early to speculate about the cause of the fire. Investigations are already under way in Scotland and we will be looking very closely at their findings and considering the implications for England and Wales.

The cornerstone of our policy remains the prevention of fire. When fires do occur, simple precautions such as keeping fire doors closed and installing smoke alarms can play a vital role in reducing death and injury. Integrated Risk Management Plans will make sure that more work is done by the Fire and Rescue Service to prevent fires in the first place, by identifying those people in the community most at risk, and targeting resources more effectively.

Sprinklers can also play an important role in suppressing fires where they have broken out, though it is too early to conclude that if the Rosepark Nursing Home had been fitted with a sprinkler system, any loss of life could have been prevented.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been actively investigating the effectiveness of sprinkler systems in tackling fires in residential properties. The results of this work, which is being undertaken on our behalf by the Building Research Establishment, are being fed into the review of the fire safety aspects of the Building Regulations (England and Wales), which is currently under-way. A report of the work will shortly be published, enabling those involved with fire safety in buildings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of residential sprinkler systems. However, the tragic incident at the weekend indicates that sprinklers may have a role to play in protecting vulnerable groups such as; homes for children, homes for elderly people, homes for disabled people, and, higher risk houses in multiple occupation.

In relation to existing premises, including residential care homes, an employer is required under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997, as amended, and under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to undertake a risk assessment in order to safeguard the safety from fire not only of his employees but of all people on his premises affected by his work. This assessment can include the provision of sprinklers within the building. This requirement will be extended by the proposed Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order to include most premises to which the public have access, and the duty imposed upon the employer will be extended to include any person who is responsible for managing the premises.

In the meantime our Community Fire Safety programme continues to educate people about the risks associated with fire and the measures which can mitigate against its occurrence. This programme has already been effective in reducing fire deaths and injuries from accidental fires.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 5 February 2004

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Report (Dundee City Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) follow-up inspection report on Dundee City Council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The "Performance Standards for housing benefits" allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the Standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

The BFI inspected Dundee City Council against the Performance Standards for housing benefits. The report finds that the council is not at Standard for any of the seven functional areas of the Performance Standards—strategic management, customer services, processing of claims, working with landlords, internal security, counter-fraud, and overpayments.

However, there had been some improvement since the first inspection report, published in June 1999, and the council's overall level of performance for administering benefits and counter-fraud activities was fair.

At the first inspection, BFI reported that Dundee City Council needed to develop a more effective and secure benefits administration system. The council lacked key safeguarding policies and procedures, and there were significant delays in processing benefit claims.

The follow-up report finds that the council had responded positively to the first inspection introducing 39 (71 per cent.) of 55 major recommendations. However, arrears of work and insufficient staff resources had prevented sustained improvement. Evidence gathering to support benefit claims was generally thorough but the council was failing to adequately protect the gateway to benefits due to processing delays. Performance was significantly below the clearance times required by the Standards. Overpayments were occurring because notified changes of circumstances were not being dealt with promptly.

The report finds that policies for safeguarding benefits had been introduced and sanctions were used to punish and deter benefits fraudsters. Recovery of housing benefits overpayments had improved markedly since the first inspection.

In 2002–03, Dundee City Council administered some £70 million in housing benefits, about 14 per cent. of its total gross revenue expenditure.

The report makes recommendations to help the council address weaknesses and to further improve the administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Community Sentences and Benefits Pilots

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): The Department is today publishing a research report by the National Centre for Social Research that presents the findings of the evaluation of the policy to apply benefit sanctions to offenders found by the courts to have breached their community sentences. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The scheme has been piloted by Jobcentre Plus and the Probation Service in Derbyshire, Hertfordshire, Teesside and the West Midlands since October 2001. The evaluation looked at the effects of the policy between 15 October 2001 and 14 October 2002. Overall it found a small, positive impact on compliance with community sentences, with an estimated 1.8 per cent. increase in compliance among those on relevant benefits.

The Government gave a commitment not to extend the scheme nationally without considering carefully the findings of the evaluation. Although there has been a positive impact on compliance and over 1,490 offenders have been sanctioned since the pilots commenced, the report also identifies some problems in the administration of the scheme and the way it is explained to offenders.

On this basis we have decided to continue the pilots for a further year along with improvements to the monitoring and management of the probation processes together with better and more frequent explanations of the scheme to offenders themselves. These two changes, identified in the report as shortcomings during the first phase of the pilots, will ensure that the Department is informed of breaches, and a sanction imposed on the offender in all relevant cases. This in turn will help offenders to relate the sanction more clearly to the behaviour which gave rise to their breach.

The results of these operational improvements on the effectiveness of the scheme will be assessed before a decision is made on the long term future of the scheme.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Union Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Denis MacShane): The forthcoming business in the Council of the European Union is as follows:

Date	*Location*	*Event*
February		
4	Brussels	COREPER 2
4	Brussels	COREPER 1
6	Brussels	COREPER 1
9	Brussels	Meeting of Eurogroup
10	Brussels	ECOFIN
11	Brussels	COREPER 1
11	Brussels	COREPER 2
13	Brussels	COREPER 1
18	Brussels	COREPER 1
18	Brussels	COREPER 2
19	Brussels	Justice & Home Affairs
20	Brussels	COREPER 1
23–24	Brussels	General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC)
24	Brussels	EU Moldova Cooperation Council (Troika)
24	Brussels	Agriculture & Fisheries Council
25–26	Porlaoise	Meeting of Regional Policy Ministers
25	Brussels	COREPER 1
26	Brussels	Education, Youth & Culture Council
26–27	Brussels	Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee
26–27	Brussels	Meeting of Regional Policy Ministers
26	Brussels	COREPER 2
27	Brussels	COREPER 1
March		
1–2	Cork	ASEM Finance Deputies' Meeting
2	Brussels	Environment Council
3	Brussels	COREPER 1
3	Brussels	COREPER 2
4–6	Co. Clare	Youth Ministerial Conference
4–5	Brussels	Employment, Social Policy, Health & Consumer Affairs (Ministerial Informal)
8	Brussels	Meeting of Eurogroup
8–9	Ankara	EU Ministerial Troika with Turkey
8–9	Brusssels	Transport, Telecom & Energy Council
9	Brussels	ECOFIN
10	Brussels	COREPER 2
10	Brussels	COREPER 1
11	Dublin	EU/Russia Ministerial Meeting (Troika)
12	Brussels	COREPER 1
17	Brussels	COREPER 1
18	Brussels	COREPER 2
18–19	Dublin	OECD Ministers Conference
19	Brussels	COREPER 1
22	Brussels	Agriculture & Fisheries Council
22–23	Brussels	General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC)
24	Brussels	COREPER 1
24	Brussels	COREPER 2
24–25	Brussels	Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee
25–26	Brussels	EUROPEAN COUNCIL
30	Dublin	EU/Ukraine Ministerial Meeting (Troika)
30	Brussels	Justice & Home Affairs (Ministerial Informal)
31	Brussels	COREPER 1
April		
2	Punchestown	Meeting of Eurogroup
2–3	Punchestown	ECOFIN
7–8	Co. Wicklow	Ministerial Conference on Communicating Europe
16–17	Tullamore	GYMNICH
26–27	Brussels	General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC)
26–27	Brussels	Agriculture & Fisheries Council
27	Luxembourg	EU/Russia Permanent Partnership Council (Troika?)
29–30	Brussels	Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee
29–30	Brussels	Justice & Home Affairs (Ministerial Informal)
May		
6–7	Dublin	EuroMed Foreign Ministers
7	Limerick	Meeting of Ministers with responsibility for Equality
9–11	Killarney	Agriculture Informal Ministerial Meeting
10	Brussels	Meeting of Eurogroup
11	Brussels	ECOFIN
11–12	Cork	Health Ministers Consultative Meeting
14–16	Waterford	Informal Meeting of EU Environment Ministers
17–18	Brussels	General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC)
19–20	Offaly	Informal Budget Committee
21	Moscow	EU/Russia Summit (Troika)
23–25	Brussels	Agriculture & Fisheries Council
24–25	Brussels	Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee
24–25	Brussels	Agriculture & Fisheries Council
25–27	Co. Galway	Conference on Islands and Territorial cohesion—Meeting New Challenges
27–28	Brussels	Education, Youth & Culture Council
27–31	Dublin	Ministers and Directors General of Public Administration
June		
1–2	Luxembourg	Health Council
1	Dublin	Development Ministers' Meeting
1	Luxembourg	Meeting of Eurogroup
2	Luxembourg	ECOFIN
8	Luxembourg	Justice & Home Affairs Council Meeting
10–11	Luxembourg	Transport, Telecom & Energy Council
14–15	Luxembourg	General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC)
17–18	Brussels	EUROPEAN COUNCIL
21–22	Luxembourg	Agriculture & Fisheries Council
21–22	Brussels	Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee
28–29	Luxembourg	Council Meeting of EU Environment Ministers
July		
8	tbc	EU-Ukraine Summit
12–14	tbc	Informal Ministerial Education Youth and Culture
19	tbc	JHA Council

FAC Response to 2003 FCO Annual Report

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): This week, I laid before Parliament Government White Paper Command 6107, "Twelfth Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee Session 2002–03 Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2003 Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs".

The Committee draws a number of conclusions and makes various recommendations in its Report on a variety of issues including staff management, resources and the FCO's overseas estate. My response covers all these points.

The FCO welcomes the Committee's recognition among other things of its staffs commitment, often in difficult circumstances; its Public Diplomacy efforts with the BBC World Service and British Council to improve perceptions of the UK in the Arab and Muslim worlds; the improved management of its locally-engaged staff overseas and its innovative and effective handling of rapidly increasing visa applications. The FCO will build on good practice in these areas and report on progress in future annual reports.

The Command Paper addresses the Foreign Affairs Committee's concerns about the FCO's asset recycling programme. The programme permits the FCO to invest part of the funds gained from the sale of under-performing or unsuitable property in other projects such as ICT development. The Response provides details of how we identify potential property for sale, in line with the FCO's strategic priorities. It also explains that half such capital is reinvested into the FCO's estate and that this figure will rise to 80 per cent from 1 April this year. The Paper admits the difficulties involved in sustaining the programme over the long term, but also describes how it has allowed the FCO to develop important capital estate projects such as the UK's new Embassies in Berlin and Moscow.

The paper takes issue with the Committee's observation that the FCO attempted to conceal losses associated with a cancelled ICT programme in its 2003 Annual Report and emphasises its commitment to reporting FCO activity, including costs incurred, as clearly as possible.

In its report the Committee highlighted the increasing demands being placed on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from new challenges such as Iraq while operating within a finite resource climate. Its report recommended that the Government increase the resources allocated to the FCO to prevent erosion of its core activity. The FCO's response welcomes the Committee's recognition of the difficult resource climate in which the FCO currently has to operate. It describes how the new FCO Strategy (Government White Paper Command 6052, "UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO") which I laid before Parliament on 2 December 2003 will be a major tool in prioritising our work in future and ensuring that resources are targeted to achieve the most important goals of the Government's international policies.

We are now in the process of putting the FCO Strategy into practice. We have established a departmental change programme, derived from the Strategy, which sets out what we intend to do to focus our resources on priorities, become more flexible and responsive, improve the diversity of our people, skills and experience, and target our activity to meet the needs of our customers across Government and the UK public. As part of the Change Programme we are reviewing our organisation in London and abroad to ensure that it is aligned with our priorities and able to deliver the outcomes we seek.

The Foreign Affairs Committee outlines some concerns it has about the FCO's posts overseas. It recommends that the FCO open a new post in Kyrgyzstan, and suggests that where post closures are being considered, the Department should seek creative alternatives. The Response explains that, to meet its strategic priorities and ensure safe and secure working environments for its staff while working within resource limitations, the FCO is obliged to adapt and amend its pattern of overseas representation. The FCO has already introduced alternative methods of representation in some parts of West Africa and agrees with the Committee that such options are preferable to Post closure. The FCO's network of diplomatic posts will remain a vital means of delivering the Government's priorities and building UK influence abroad. We need to ensure that it is adequately resourced, secure and tasked to address our most important priorities.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Inland Fisheries Annual Reports

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela Smith): Copies of the Inland Fisheries Annual Reports of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure for 2000, 2001 and 2002 have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

These documents provide details of the Department's activities to conserve, protect and develop salmon and inland fisheries under the provisions of the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966, as amended and include statistical information and income and expenditure details for those years.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Post Office Urban Reinvention Network

The Minister for Energy, E-Commerce and Postal Services (Mr. Stephen Timms): The urban re-invention programme aims to create a smaller, more viable network of post office branches adequate in number and suitably located to ensure accessible delivery of service to customers. At the end of the programme, within the UK as a whole, 95 per cent. of the urban population will still live within a mile of the nearest Post Office branch. It is supported directly by Government funding. This programme is absolutely necessary. If the Post office does not adapt to changing customer demands it will spiral into terminal decline.

During recent weeks Members of Parliament and Postwatch have become increasingly concerned about some aspects of the urban re-invention programme. In particular, the consultation arrangements have been criticised. There has been mounting evidence that in too many cases Post Office Limited has not handled them appropriately, or with sufficient sensitivity. Accordingly I asked Post Office Limited and Postwatch to review urgently the arrangements for the consultation currently employed and to propose changes to make them more inclusive and appropriate to achieve a viable network to serve the public after the programme is concluded.

They have responded to this challenge and I am pleased to announce the following changes applicable to the remainder of the programme which will take immediate effect.

Post Office Limited will advise MPs and local authorities as soon as possible of the remaining timetable for commencing consultations on plans for their area.

Local authorities will be invited to provide relevant information, in advance, on infrastructure and regeneration projects to assist Post Office Limited in the preparation of area plans.

When preparing an area plan, Post Office Limited will achieve a balance between sub-postmasters volunteering to leave the network, those offices which are not viable and the need for relocations and new openings.

Post Office Limited will advise MPs and members of the devolved administrations on a strictly confidential basis of proposals, including the overall rationale for the proposed area plan, one week before they are put out to public consultation.

Public consultation will be on the proposal to close an individual office but Post Office Limited will also take account of, and respond to, views expressed about the proposed service provision in the area in reaching decisions on individual closures.

Once final decisions have been made and announced, Post Office Limited will write to Postwatch, Members of Parliament and local authorities referring to the main points raised during the consultation and giving the reasons for its decision.

Public consultation will normally last for six weeks but will in future be extended to take account of public holidays that occur during that period.

In view of Post Office Limited's responsibility to notify its staff at directly-managed offices of any proposal to close the office before the proposal is put to public consultation, the advance notification of Postwatch, MPs and of the devolved administrations will be replaced by notification of the proposal the day before the proposal is made public and the public consultation period will be extended to eight weeks.

If branches previously identified as expecting to receive additional custom following closure of nearby offices, are themselves subsequently proposed for closure, Post Office Limited will provide a detailed explanation of its reasoning in putting forward the proposal for consultation.

Post Office Limited will establish a separate team dedicated to promoting and supervising the implementation of investment required to upgrade remaining offices to ensure the provision of adequate facilities for the additional custom provoked by the closure of nearby offices.

Criteria have been agreed to define the "exceptional circumstances" which may justify putting into public consultation a closure proposal for an office located within the 10 per cent. most deprived urban wards and with no other office within half a mile. The core criteria are: the branch proposed for closure being relatively small; having experienced a significant decline in business between March 2000 and March 2003 with a continuing trend which, if it has not already done so, will render the business non-viable; and having a dense network of surrounding offices with several accessible by reasonable transport links within half a mile to a mile. Other criteria which might also apply include: significant depopulation of the surrounding area or the geography of public service and retail provision has shifted; a clear majority of customers of the branch proposed for closure live within half a mile of alternative branches; and security issues which make it unlikely to be feasible to continue service.

Finally Post Office Limited has confirmed that the documentation between itself and a sub-postmaster does not create any binding arrangement for closure until the public consultation has been completed. No contract binding on Post Office Limited is signed before the public consultation process has ended.

The above new arrangements will be reviewed by Post Office Limited and Postwatch one month after commencement to ensure that the implementation is satisfactory.

Post Office closures will inevitably continue to be contentious. However, these changes to procedure should ensure that there is confidence in the consultation process.

Post Office Limited is committed to the successful implementation of the new arrangements and to working with Postwatch to ensure an effective consultation process designed to maximise the quality of judgment and transparency, and to produce a fair result for customers and the Company.

EDUCATION

Youth Council for Northern Ireland

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy): I have published today the Accounts of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland for the period 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Ministerial Statement

Friday 6 February 2004

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Gibraltar

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): The Chief Minister of Gibraltar wrote to me on 22 December, formally tabling proposals for reform of the 1969 Gibraltar Constitution. I have replied, acknowledging the importance of these proposals to Gibraltar, and saying that they will receive the most careful consideration. I expect to meet the Chief Minister soon for an initial discussion.

The cornerstone of our policy towards Gibraltar remains the sovereignty commitment, that the UK Government will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their freely and democratically expressed wishes. Whatever the outcome of the present proposals, that position will not change.

The starting point for consideration of these proposals is the Government's general policy towards the UK's relations with our Overseas Territories, as set out in the 1999 White Paper, "*Partnership for Progress and Prosperity: Britain and the Overseas Territories*" (Cm 4264). As my hon. Friend, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said in his written statement of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, cols 151–52WS, the security and good governance of the overseas territories remains a key foreign policy objective for this Government.

While the people of Gibraltar wish to remain British, it is essential that there should be an appropriate balance of powers as between the UK and Gibraltar. While we recognise the aspiration of the people of Gibraltar to manage more of their own affairs, the UK Government must have sufficient and effective powers to protect its overall responsibility for ensuring good governance; compliance with international obligations; and minimisation of contingent liabilities. An assessment of the powers required by the UK Government to deliver a balanced and modern relationship must, in particular, take full account of the fact that the UK is responsible for Gibraltar's compliance with EU law, including ultimately before the European Court of Justice and, in considering the constitutional relationship between the UK and Gibraltar, HMG will take account of Gibraltar's particular circumstances and the wider international context.

This Government will therefore study the proposals put forward by the Gibraltar Government, and looks forward to discussion of them in due course, with a view to the further development of a modern and appropriate relationship with Gibraltar.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 9 February 2004

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Greater London Authority

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): The Greater London authority general grant for 2004–05 today been determined at £36,328,000, following consultation with the Mayor of London. This grant is a block grant paid for the purposes of the authority and its functional bodies.

HOME DEPARTMENT

National Asylum Support Service

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes): On 15 July 2003, I published the key findings from the report of the independent review of the Operation of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), and I promised a further statement in due course about the action taken in the light of the review. As I indicated in July, the review has formed the basis of a major programme of reform. Progress against that programme continues to be overseen by a steering group chaired by Bill Jeffrey, Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate reporting directly to me. The Steering Group includes an external perspective provided by Alan Barnish who was a member of the independent review team. I am now in a position to update the House on progress which has been made in—implementing this programme, since the review was completed six months ago.

The review made it clear that some key issues needed to be addressed. It is still the case that NASS faces significant challenges, due, among other factors, to the complexity and visibility of its role. But in the last six months NASS has both raised its performance in a number of specific areas highlighted by the review, and laid the foundations for sustained medium and longer-term improvements across its business as a whole. The timed action plan I referred to in my July statement is now in place.

Action in relation to Key Findings:

KEY FINDINGS (1) AND (2);

For NASS to perform at its best it needs to:

be clear what is expected of it and how its success will be judged;

have the financial and managerial resources to do the job;

have a thorough understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses;

have a clear view of what it needs to do to improve its performance;

understand its impact on the whole end to end asylum process;

sort out some of its key business processes and procedures;

get better at working with the rest of IND in a fully joined up operation.

NASS needs to have its purpose, aims and role clarified and re-affirmed by Ministers. It needs to be given a realistic remit and the necessary resources and political support to do that job.

The principles of good performance identified by the review have been accepted and are being applied. NASS's purpose, aim and role have been clarified and reaffirmed by Ministers. Appendix A shows the statement of NASS's purpose, aims and roles (collectively comprising NASS's strategic intent) which have been developed. Appendix A also shows the nine objectives on which NASS is now concentrating its effort upon support of the overall strategic intent.

KEY FINDING (3):

NASS needs urgently to improve its operational performance and standards of customer care. It needs to get better at working with its partners and stakeholders, and much slicker at sorting out basic processing errors especially when these affect individual asylum seekers and damage the reputation of the organisation.

The communications team within NASS has been strengthened and is developing a strategic framework for NASS's contact with external partners and stakeholders. A new National Asylum Support Forum has been established with partner organisations and has met three times since the statement on 15 July.

Significant improvements have been made to the performance of IND's Telephone Enquiry Bureau (INEB). As part of that, the average time it takes to get through to INEB's cash support helpline has fallen in the past eight months from over three and a half minutes to under one minute.

KEY FINDING (4):

NASS needs to strengthen its management capacity at all levels. Two new senior posts have already been created, but more needs to be done in the middle tier of the organisation which is under-resourced and hence weak.

A new governance structure has been developed and is now in place. The senior management team (SMT) has been strengthened through the appointment of experienced officials to the two new senior civil service posts. A separate and larger programme group is tasked with driving forward the many additional and cross-cutting strands of project-based work within the organisation. The middle tier of the organisation has been strengthened by the delivery, over the period, of management training to 150 NASS managers.

KEY FINDING (5):

NASS needs a realistic three-year budget and flexibility in the way it can be used to respond quickly to changing circumstances and opportunities without going through over elaborate bureaucratic processes.

An appropriate 3-year budget has been put in place together with arrangements for reviewing it, and therefore achieving flexibility within the context of IND's overall budgetary framework.

KEY FINDINGS (6) AND (7):

NASS needs support to develop and implement a medium term strategy. This must be produced in the context of an overall strategy for IND which clarifies and strengthens the links between NASS and the other parts of the asylum system.

A medium term plan needs to address:

What they should be aiming to get out of the next round of accommodation and other contracts;

What phase 2 of the regionalisation should look like;

How to work better as an integrated part of IND and develop meaningful relationships with key stakeholders.

In parallel with addressing the immediate concerns identified by the review, NASS is developing a medium term strategy to ensure improvements are sustained and built upon.

An IT steering group has been set up within NASS and a NASS IT strategy is being prepared. This work is fully integrated with ongoing IND-wide developments in the field of IT. The Home Secretary announced on 24 October 2003 that families who sought asylum in the UK more than three years ago would be considered for permission to live and work here. In implementing this announcement, we are piloting web-based software which enables NASS, others in IND, and our partners in central and local government, to have real time access to the live information we need to ensure an efficiently managed process.

A major stakeholder event was held in Woking in November 2003 to look at the challenges and priorities involved in renewing NASS's contracts with accommodation providers, many of which will expire in 2005. We are currently considering how to put the Woking recommendations into practice.

The first phase of regionalisation has successfully been rolled out and most of the necessary embedding of functions has been completed. NASS is now managing housing management, outreach and investigation work from its new regional locations. As a result there is much more face to face contact between the organisation and supported asylum seekers. Through the establishment of these closer links and those with its key partners, positive steps have already been taken to improve service delivery and to ensure that wider issues are dealt with more effectively.

Planning is now underway for the second phase. This will focus on improving the services currently provided centrally by NASS to dispersed asylum seekers through a wholesale review of current arrangements for managing casework. I believe this will be much welcomed by many of the key stakeholders concerned. This is a large and complex area of activity and will require a staged programme of work to ensure an effective transfer of functions.

KEY FINDINGS (8) AND (9):

NASS needs a period of stability to enable it to get on top of the job. It also needs confidence that it will not have to cope with any new initiatives and reviews without adequate time and resources to handle and implement them safely.

NASS needs to be allowed to use the breathing space provided by the drop in intake numbers to get on top of the job, not to take on new tasks.

Especial care is being taken to avoid allocating tasks to NASS which are not fully within its role and for which it is not equipped.

NASS's strategic intent comprises its purpose, aim and role, as follows:

Purpose—to provide a system of basic support to eligible asylum seekers;

Aim—to provide a system that is cost effective and which contributes to cohesive communities and to effective integration for those who are granted asylum;

Role—to;

arrange provision of accommodation to asylum seekers for the period they qualify;

arrange provision of subsistence payments to asylum seekers for the period they qualify;

work with the rest of IND to deliver an effective end to end asylum process, and to work in partnership with other agencies to deliver the above.

NASS' s strategic objectives are to:

improve day to day business performance;

reduce support costs;

fully engage and develop our staff;

improve responsiveness to queries relating to asylum support;

deliver effective and efficient regionalisation;

deliver appropriate and cost effective accommodation for asylum seekers;

deliver our business in a way which supports community cohesion;

improve linkages with other parts of the asylum process;

engage better with stakeholders and improve communications.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine Tuberculosis

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): At last year's National Farmers Union annual general meeting the Secretary of State announced a review of our bovine tuberculosis strategy. Today I am launching a consultation document that represents the outcome of the first stage of that review. The consultation period will last for 12 weeks and close on Tuesday 4 May 2004.

Copies of the consultation document are available in the Libraries of both Houses and can also be viewed on the Department's website at www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/index.htm

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Spring Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate the Department for International Development DEL for 2003–04 will be

increased by £197,583,000 from £3,756,454,000 to £3,954,037,000 and the administration costs limit has been increased by £2,566,000 from £212,250,000 to £214,816,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

(£'000)

Resources				*Capital*			
Change	*New DEL*	*Of which: voted*	*Non-voted*	*Change*	*New DEL*	*Of which: voted*	*Non-voted*
170,083	3,936,037	3,064,152	871,885	27,500	39,000	39,000	—

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from

RfR 1: Eliminating Poverty in Poorer Countries

A transfer of £15 million from the unallocated subhead to the reducing poverty in the rest of the world subhead

The take up of DEL end year flexibility for 2002–03 of £102,791,000 resource for programme costs. £41,395,000 has been allocated to the reducing poverty in Africa subhead, £40,896,000 to the improve the effectiveness of multilateral aid;

A transfer of £1,500,000 resource from the reducing poverty in Asia administration subhead to the reducing poverty in Africa administration subhead;

A transfer of £1 million resource from the reducing poverty in the rest of the world administration subhead to the reducing poverty in Africa administration subhead;

A transfer of £1,500,000 resource from the developing innovative approaches to development administration subhead to the programmes contributing to multiple objectives administration subhead;

A transfer of £6,500,000 resource from the central reserve as a contribution to Iraq reconstruction to the reducing poverty in the rest of the world subhead;

A transfer of £15 million resource from the improve effectiveness of multilateral aid subhead to capital DEL; £13,240,000 to the reducing poverty in the rest of the world subhead and £1,760,000 to the reducing poverty in Africa subhead;

A transfer of £1,050,000 resource from the reducing poverty in Africa subhead to capital DEL. £530,000 to the reduce poverty in Africa capital subhead, £270,000 to the reducing poverty in the rest of the world subhead and £250,000 to the central departments subhead;

A transfer of £1,050,000 resource from the reducing poverty in Asia subhead to capital DEL. £210,000 to the reduce poverty in Asia capital subhead, £40,000 to the reducing poverty in the rest of the world subhead, £120,000 to the developing innovative approaches to development subhead, £170,000 to the programmes contributing to multiple objectives subhead and £510,000 to the central departments subhead;

A transfer of £950,000 resource from the reducing poverty in the rest of the world subhead to capital DEL, central department subhead; A transfer of £910,000 resource from sub-Saharan Africa conflict prevention non-voted departmental unallocated provision to the Ministry of Defence;

A transfer of £11 million resource from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the global conflict prevention subhead.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

transfers from the resource to the capital budget as listed above;

to reflect an expected reduction of £8,400,000 appropriation-in-aid in the capital DEL, and a corresponding reduction in the gross capital provision;

the take up capital DEL end year flexibility for 2001–02 of £8,621,000; £8,400,000 has been allocated to the improve efficiency of multilateral aid subhead and £221,000 to the central departments subhead.

The increase will be met by inter-departmental transfers or from the DEL Reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

TREASURY

Economic Reform in the EU

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): The Government are today publishing a new report on economic reform in the EU.

The report evaluates the progress made in reforming Europe's economy since the March 2000 Lisbon European Council, noting both the EU's achievements over the past four years, and the scale of the challenge ahead if Europe is to compete effectively in the global economy and meet its goals of higher productivity, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. It notes that, while 6 million jobs have been created in Europe since 1999, a further 21 million are needed to meet the Union's target for 2010. Moreover, productivity in the US remains at least 14 per cent. higher than that in the EU.

The report concludes that further action is needed to improve efficiency and productivity in Europe, with steps to promote increased labour, product and capital market flexibility. It sets out a series of areas for reform ahead of the forthcoming spring European Council, including to improve the regulatory framework in Europe, strengthen the single market, deliver more and better jobs, promote enterprise and innovation, ensure an ambitious outcome to world trade negotiations, strengthen the transatlantic economic relationship, and meet the challenge of sustainable development.

Copies of the report are available in the Vote Office and the Library of the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Serious Organised Crime Agency

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Blunkett): Since 1997 crime in England and Wales has fallen by a quarter. The chances of being a victim of crime are now at their lowest for over 20 years. At the same time, we continue to face a major challenge from organised crime which costs the country billions of pounds in lost revenue, facilitates 70 per cent. of all illegal immigration to the European Union and can cause local communities huge damage, for example through its link with local drugs markets and all the

problems of addiction and crime that go with them. The UK crack and heroin markets alone are estimated to be worth £3 billion per year.

Organised criminals are willing to resort to extreme violence, intimidation and corruption to protect their illegal businesses. They often display detailed awareness of law enforcement methods and take sophisticated counter-measures including counter-surveillance techniques and elaborate money laundering arrangements. Through their involvement in people trafficking, organised criminals exploit the vulnerable and deal in human misery as appears to be the case in the tragic events at Morecambe Bay at the end of last week. They use every legal device available to them to evade prosecution when they are arrested.

Responsibility for tackling organised crime has until now been spread across a range of different agencies. Each of them has been highly effective in their own area of specialism—and I pay tribute to the outstanding work they and their staff have undertaken to date—but each must also work within its own priorities and departmental structures. This can make co-ordination difficult and has led to blurred lines of accountability in some key areas like drugs and fraud and to a lack of critical mass in some important skill areas like those required to tackle financial and other economic crime.

In response to these issues, the Prime Minister announced last July that the Government would be reviewing the structures of our national law enforcement agencies responsible for investigating serious organised crime.

Over the past six months we have undertaken detailed consultations with all those involved in fighting organised crime, including the police service and all of the relevant national agencies and regulators. The clear view from almost all we consulted was that the present arrangements were not satisfactory and that there was a strong case for rationalising existing structures.

I can therefore today announce the next step in this process. Drawing on the lessons from this consultation we intend to bring together in a single national agency—the Serious Organised Crime Agency—which will report to me, the responsibilities which currently fall to the National Criminal Intelligence Service, the National Crime Squad, the Home Office's responsibilities for organised immigration crime and the investigation and intelligence responsibilities of HM Customs and Excise in tackling serious drug trafficking and recovering related criminal assets. The agency will also bring a new focus to bear on dealing with the problem of financial crime.

The creation of the new agency is a key part of a wider series of changes including new powers available to tackle organised crime. I will set out the detail of all these changes in a statement to the House when I publish a policy paper within the next few weeks.

The new agency will have as its core objective reducing the harm caused to the UK and its citizens by organised crime including the trafficking of drugs and people. It will have the capabilities to make a real difference through enhanced intelligence, financial investigation skills, economic analysis and better and more sophisticated use of technology. It will develop a comprehensive strategy for reducing the harm caused by organised crime and will be much more than the sum of its parts, drawing on best practice and skills from all the existing agencies to focus on those criminals and criminal markets causing us the most harm. It will work very closely with the revenue departments which will continue to be responsible for tackling revenue and tax fraud. It will build on the determination, professionalism and success of the existing agencies and their staff and will be approaching 5,000 strong.

The new agency will work closely with police forces, regulators and others throughout the UK. Its focus will be on crime that crosses national and international frontiers. But, where a request is made, or where it is otherwise agreed, it will also have a key role in supporting individual police forces in tackling crime that crosses police force boundaries. It will provide intelligence from criminal activity to the wider law enforcement community, drawing on the intelligence they themselves provide in developing a firm understanding and strategy.

The agency will have a UK-wide remit. However, in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency and the police service of Northern Ireland will continue to exercise the functions they currently undertake in partnership with existing UK agencies.

Specialist prosecutors answerable to the Attorney General will co-operate closely with officers of the new agency and work alongside them wherever this makes good operational sense. They will be available whenever required to provide comprehensive, practical and specialist advice to help shape investigations and develop strong and well-presented cases for prosecution. The specialist prosecutors will stay with each case from the outset of investigations right through to the point of sentence.

The arrangements for the agency's governance will be crucial. A Home Office-led taskforce, including representatives of those who will form part of the new organisation, will consult stakeholders on this and report back by the end of this month enabling me to give further details to the House in the statement to which I have already referred. The agency will need high powered and dynamic leadership to ensure it becomes a world leader in its field, so I am today appointing an executive search agency to help us recruit a Chairman and Director-General, with a view to having them in place by the early summer.

Until their appointment, representatives of all the agencies concerned will be driving forward the transition process, under Home Office chairmanship, to enable the agency to get off to a rapid and effective start.

We shall take the earliest opportunity to seek Parliament's approval for the legislation needed to establish the Serious Organised Crime Agency but will seek as far as possible to anticipate the benefits of these changes through closer joint working and operations, training and secondments so that this transitional phase enhances rather than disrupts this critical work.

Those who seek to damage our country and undermine our way of life through organised crime will continue to grow in expertise and sophistication. We must more than match them and ensure that the skills and insights we have developed in different areas are shared. These proposals will enable us to respond to these challenges effectively in the years ahead.

DEFENCE

Veterans

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I am announcing the launch today of "Heroes Return". This forms a central element of what has now become the "Veterans Reunited" programme, and will enable all generations to join together to remember and commemorate the 60th anniversary of the remarkable events of 1944 and 1945 that led to the end of the Second World War.

The New Opportunities Fund in collaboration with the Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Ministry of Defence has made available £10 million of National Lottery funding for many thousands of veterans to return to the overseas areas in which they saw active service during the second world war. These visits will generate a rich supply of "living memories" for our schools and museums and young people will have the opportunity to learn from veterans experiences.

In addition to the crucial role of the New Opportunities Fund and DCMS, the Veterans Agency will provide applicants with advice and support through their free phone helpline on 0800 169 2277, and further information is available on the website at www.veteransagency.mod.uk.

CABINET OFFICE

Regulation Task Force Report: "Independent Regulators"

The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Douglas Alexander): I am today publishing the Government's response to the Better Regulation Task Force's report "Independent Regulators", which the task force issued on 15 October 2003. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the work they have undertaken in producing their report, and to welcome the recommendations they have made, all 14 of which have been accepted by the Government.

In our response, we have emphasised our support for regulators to adopt the five principles of good regulation, and the code of practice on consultation; and to produce regulatory impact assessments for any new policies or initiatives which they originate. We commend the use of the enforcement concordat by relevant regulators. Government will consider very carefully the scope and scale of existing regulators before establishing a new one, and assess regularly their continuing effectiveness once established. We are to carry out a review of the variety and complexity of public bodies sponsored by central Government Departments, and this will encompass consideration of regulatory bodies.

The task force has rightly highlighted the point that the subject of the report was 'independent' regulators, so Government's role is to encourage, support and guide the regulators in their tasks, not to enforce rules and procedures. It is also the case that independent regulators are a very disparate band of bodies, so it would be impossible to produce a one size fits all set of very detailed responses. We must also be wary of increasing the costs of and burdens on the regulatory community, and those whom they regulate, unless we can be satisfied of the value of the outcomes achieved.

Copies of the report and the Government's response are available in the Libraries of both Houses, and will be available on the Better Regulation Task Force's website at:-

http://www.brtf.gov.uk/taskforce/pastreports.htm.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Rights of Way (Crime Prevention)

The Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality (Alun Michael): At a seminar in London later today, I will be announcing the names of those authorities whose nominated areas will included in a second designation order under section 118B of the Highways Act 1980. My Department and the Home Office are jointly sponsoring the seminar, which deals with crime reduction on rights of way. Over 180 delegates from local authorities, the police and crime and disorder reduction partnerships are expected to attend.

Designation will enable these highway authorities to make orders to close or divert rights of way to prevent crime. The designation order will be subject to the negative resolution procedure and will be laid as quickly as possible so that authorities can begin to use their new powers as soon as possible.

Two of the authorities concerned—Hillingdon and Leeds—were deferred from the first round of applications to give them the opportunity to provide the required level of evidence that rights of way in those areas are facilitating crime.

The remainder are all new applications received since last year. These are from Brighton and Hove, Middlesbrough, Nottingham, Oldham, York, Swale and the Wirral. A list of the authorities and the areas is set out below.

The quality of applications was very good and I am satisfied that in each of these areas there are very real problems with crime associated with the public rights of way, and that other means of crime prevention had been tried and had failed.

Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour remains one of the Government's top priorities. This announcement today is very good news for the many people living in areas such as these which are blighted by burglary, robbery, drug dealing and general antisocial behaviour.

I have written to each of the nine authorities to inform them of my decision. I have also written to those Members of Parliament whose constituencies are directly affected to let them know what has been decided.

It remains my view that, in general rights of way do not cause or facilitate crime, but that we need to act vigorously where there is a connection.

Authority (9 in total)	*Areas (20 areas)*
Brighton and Hove City Council	Whitehawk Estate
London Borough of Hillingdon	Frankie's Alley
Leeds City Council	1. Seacroft, Halton Ward 2. St Alban's Estate, Burmantofts Ward 3. St Martin's Gardens, Chapel Allerton Ward 4. University Ward 5. Wensley Green, Chapel Allerton Ward 6. Seacroft Ward 7. Calverley Gardens, Bramley Ward
Middlesbrough Council	Keswick Grove
Nottingham City Council	Rise Park
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	1. Werneth/Hollinwood 2. St Paul's/Alexandra 3. East Oldham—St Mary's/ Waterhead/Lees
Swale Borough Council	Marine Town
York City Council	1. South Bank 2. The Groves 3. Clifton/Bootham
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council	1. Wallasey 2. Tranmere (Rock Ferry and New Ferry)

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Liberia

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): With the support of Her Majesty's Government, the United Nations Security Council on 22 December 2003 unanimously adopted United Nations Security Council resolution 1521(2003). The resolution revised the determination for the basis of sanctions against Liberia—UNSCR 1343(2001) was based on Liberia's (in particular former President Charles Taylor and the former Government of Liberia) threat to Sierra Leone. The new resolution is based on Liberia's instability and the threat of proliferation of arms and armed non-State actors (including mercenaries) and their potential threat to the greater sub-region. The measures against Liberia remain the same: an arms embargo, a travel ban, a timber ban and a diamond embargo. The lift criteria have been revised. The travel ban will be started from scratch and include those who constitute a threat to the peace process in Liberia, or who are engaged in activities aimed at undermining peace and stability in Liberia and the sub-region (including senior members of former President Charles Taylor's Government and their spouses and members of Liberia's former armed forces who retain links to former President Charles Taylor).

Sudan

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): With the support of Her Majesty's Government, the original council decision 94/165/CFSP of 15 March 1994 imposing a EU arms embargo against Sudan was repealed and replaced by common position CFSP/31/ 2004 on 9 January 2004. A council regulation will follow shortly. The embargo prohibits *(a)* the delivery or supply of arms and related matériel to Sudan; *(b)* the provision of technical assistance, brokering services and other services related to military activities and to the provision, manufacture, maintenance and use of arms and related matériel to any person, entity or body in. or for use in, Sudan; and *(c)* the provision of financing or financial assistance related to military activities to any person, entity or body, in or for use in. Sudan. Exemptions to the embargo are permitted for non-lethal military equipment intended solely for humanitarian or protective use, institution building programmes of the UN, EU and European Community, for matériel intended for EU and UN crisis management, for de-mining equipment and matériel for use in de-mining operations, and for the provision of financing, financial assistance and technical assistance related to such equipment.

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CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Community Radio

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): I have today published a draft Community Radio Order, associated "Keeling Schedule" and explanatory memorandum for public consultation. Copies of these documents have been deposited in the House Libraries, and are available on the Department's website. The Department welcomes comments and the consultation period will last until 20 April 2004.

This Order proposes to introduce a new tier of very local, not-for-profit (or not profit distributing) radio. Community radio should be different from, and complementary to, existing independent local radio. Community radio offers potential benefits in terms of social inclusion, local education, training and experience, and wider access for communities to broadcasting opportunities.

The Communications Act provides for the possible establishment of a fund to support community radio.

OFCOM will shortly be publishing their own draft guidance on how to apply for community radio licences.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Fire and Rescue Authorities

The Minister for Local Government, Regional Governance and Fire (Mr. Nick Raynsford): I have today made available copies of a consultation document on charging for services by Fire and Rescue Authorities in the Libraries of the House.

Authorities already have a power under the Fire Services Act 1947 to charge for services other than fighting fires. The White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service" gave a commitment to continue to provide such a power and to consult on any proposals to extend the charging regime.

Clause 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Bill currently before this House provides for the Secretary of State to specify by Order the services for which an authority may levy a charge.

The consultation document contains details of the services for which authorities in England and Wales currently levy a charge and these form the basis of our proposals. Comments are welcome on any part of our proposals. In particular, we welcome responses on the direction of travel in respect of the provision by authorities of detailed advice or consultancy.

The consultation period will close on 7 May 2004.

Housing and Employment Mobility Service Contract

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is today announcing to the House that we are letting a contract to provide housing and employment mobility services.

The principal objective for HEMS is to facilitate mobility—especially labour mobility for social housing tenants who want to move to other areas.

HEMS will have three main service components. One—facilitated mobility services to social landlords and their tenants and applicants to help tenants and applicants to find new homes. This will continue and enhance the provision of the grant funded mobility services currently provided by Housing Mobility and Exchange Services (HOMES) and LAWN (the Association of London Government scheme that helps tenants who want to, move out of London to areas with excess housing). Two—web-based information about available housing, neighbourhoods and job vacancies. Three—web access to information on vacancies in social housing.

TREASURY

Tax Avoidance

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Legislation to prevent tax avoidance through manipulation of partnership losses is to be included in the Finance Bill 2004. The legislation will apply to individuals who do not spend a significant amount of time in the partnership trade. For trading losses which arise in any of the first four years that a partner carries on a trade, relief for set-off against other income will be limited to the partner's financial contribution to the business. It will also ensure that where a partner claims trading losses against other income and then disposes of rights to future income, a charge to income tax arises on the disposal. The changes will have effect from today.

A copy of today's Inland Revenue News Release giving the relevant background to this measure is being deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and is also accessible on the Inland Revenue website: http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Common Agricultural Policy Reform

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Ian Pearson): The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland launched a major consultation exercise in September 2003 covering the choice of the main implementation options arising out of the CAP reform agreement reached in Luxembourg on 26 June 2003. The consultation ended on 16 January 2004 and after having considered stakeholder responses and the relative merits of the available choices, I have decided deploy the following options in Northern Ireland.

Full decoupling of direct producer support will be implemented across the beef sheep and arable sectors.

Full decoupling of direct producer support will be introduced in the diary sector from 2005.

The model of decoupling used will be a static vertical hybrid based partly on eligible land held in 2005 and partly on past patterns of individual producer subsidy claims.

National envelopes will not be deployed at this point.

Decisions on the use of the additional Rural Development Regulation options are deferred and will be considered as part of a separate consultation exercise on future modulation policy scheduled to commence in March 2004.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Union Modernisation

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe): Today, I tabled an amendment to the Employment Relations Bill concerning the provision of a new funding scheme. The amendment inserts a new section into the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 which would create a power for the Secretary of State to make funds available to independent trade unions and federations of trade unions to modernise their operations.

I envisage that the size of the fund would be in the region of £5 million—10 million in total, with expenditure spread over several years, probably beginning in 2005–06. The funding scheme would be used to support innovative projects in such areas as:

training union representatives (for example in the area of business and people management) in order to help promote the development of high performance workplaces;

reviewing internal union structures and organisation and to support more efficient management systems within unions;

enabling unions to broaden their dialogue with members by greater use of the internet and other new technologies and to develop innovative and user-friendly voting mechanisms; and

making union systems more accessible to young people and other under-represented groups within unions.

The case for establishing a Fund is compelling. Unions—just like businesses—need targeted support to speed their adaptation to changing labour market trends and to new ways of working. Unions have done much to modernise themselves and several, often supported by the TUC, have made significant progress in that direction. However, as a number of representations from unions have confirmed, without assistance the pace of change will be slow. By encouraging unions to adapt more quickly, we will ensure that they play their full and considerable part in building productive relations at work that will benefit union members, other workers, their employers and the economy more generally.

The fund will not therefore be used to support the day-to-day work of unions, and it will not impact directly on collective bargaining. It will not be used to support projects which could be funded from other Government programmes.

Subject to Parliamentary approval of this new provision, the Government will publish for full public consultation the draft rules and procedures of the fund after Royal Assent. It is likely these rules and procedures will draw on the example of the partnership at work fund, involving an independent advisory board who will make recommendations to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on the acceptability of union bids for fund money.

TRANSPORT

Air Transport White Paper

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty): I am announcing the publication of the supporting documents for the "*Future of Air Transport*" White Paper which was published on 16 December 2003. These reports provide some of the background to decisions taken in the White Paper.

A list of all 27 supporting documents has been placed on the Department's website with details for obtaining hard copies. All the documents, listed below, are available in the Libraries of the House.

Air quality assessments supporting the Government's Air Transport White Paper "The Future of Air Transport"

Passenger Forecasts: Additional Analysis

Review of London Oxford Airport Proposal

Review of Redhill Aerodrome Ltd Proposal

Review of Sheppey Airport Proposal

Review of Thames Reach Airport Proposal

Review of Goodwin Sands Airport Proposal

Development of Airport Capacity in the Thames Estuary

Aviation and Global Warming report

Demand Forecasts for a Potential New International Airport in South East Wales

Air Passenger Growth and Airport Capacity: Advice to the Department for Transport on the Future Nature and Distribution of Demand for Air Travel

Air Passenger Growth and Airport Capacity: A Technical Discussion Paper

Letter from CAA to DfT on Northolt and Redhill Airspace Implications

The Effect of Competition between Regional Airports on—Airline Fares

DfT, Birmingham Airport, SRA, Birmingham Airport Report on the enhancements needed to increase rail mode share at Birmingham Airport

Midlands News Site—Note on Issues Raised in Consultation Response

Edinburgh and Glasgow Airport Runway Options—Floodplain Impact and Mitigation Report

ERCD Report 0307: Updated Methodology and Supplementary Information Relating to Aircraft Noise Exposure Estimates for UK airports

ERCD Report 0308: Revised Future Aircraft Noise Exposure Estimates for UK Airports

Newcastle International Airport (NCL) Rail Access Study

The Future of Air Transport: Scotland—The Review of Air Traffic Forecasts for Airports Serving the Central Belt of Scotland

Review of Scottish Airport Costs

RHASS/Edinburgh Airport: Potential Development Options to 2030

RHASS/Edinburgh Airport: Potential Long Term Development Options

Road concepts for Edinburgh & Glasgow Airports

The Potential for Developing a Regional Hub in Scotland

Aviation, Core Cities and Regional Economic Development

Written Ministerial Statements

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HOME DEPARTMENT

Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Blunkett): Lord Carlile of Berriew QC has completed the report on the operation of part IV of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, in 2003, which will be laid before the House today.

I am grateful to Lord Carlile for his work and am pleased to note that he is again satisfied that I have certified persons only in appropriate cases and that I have exercised my independent judgment in each case having given due regard to advice from officials.

I welcome Lord Carlile's recommendations which I will be considering in detail over the next few weeks. They will provide a useful contribution to the debates.

Ms Sarah Woodhouse

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes): I am pleased to inform the House that Ms Sarah Woodhouse has been appointed as the independent monitor of certification of claims as unfounded under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Ms Woodhouse has been appointed as monitor for two years. She will monitor the operation of the use of the power to certify an asylum claim or human right claim (or both) as unfounded under section 94 of the NIA Act 2002. In particular she will consider the procedures used to determine whether claims are unfounded and the quality and effectiveness of decisions made under this procedure. She will report annually to the Secretary of State who will then lay a copy of the report before the House.

Police Firearms

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): The statistics for 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 show that the number of police operations in which firearms were issued was 14,827. The number of occasions on which conventional firearms were discharged by police was 37, which covered 10 incidents. There were also four occasions where a baton round was used as a less lethal alternative to a conventional firearm.

Armed response vehicles were deployed on 11,818 occasions and there were 5,763 authorised firearms officers in England and Wales

Full details are set out in the tables below:

Number of operations in which firearms were authorised

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
TOTAL	10,915	11,109	13,991	14,827
AVON & SOMERSET	90	65	195	262
BEDFORDSHIRE	190	294	237	301
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	75	71	114	57
CHESHIRE	386	545	419	451
CLEVELAND	76	28	37	170
CITY OF LONDON	125	3	40	131
CUMBRIA	24	30	71	77
DERBYSHIRE	178	167	275	401
DEVON & CORNWALL	65	151	101	96
DORSET	79	174	184	193
DURHAM	114	40	89	83
ESSEX	497	435	323	312
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	52	48	165	185
GTR MANCHESTER	224	357	580	518
HAMPSHIRE	103	114	198	162
HERTFORDSHIRE	73	86	112	172
HUMBERSIDE	193	158	297	187
KENT	85	83	115	137
LANCASHIRE	267	242	232	238
LEICESTERSHIRE	222	217	300	268
LINCOLNSHIRE	155	336	477	392
MERSEYSIDE	489	825	1,020	628
METROPOLITAN	2,862	1,862	2,447	3,199
NORFOLK	239	226	175	200
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	57	58	43	138
NORTHUMBRIA	465	708	1,440	1,275
NORTH YORKSHIRE	61	72	92	100
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	255	233	384	452
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	237	127	258	463
STAFFORDSHIRE	174	203	232	281
SUFFOLK	165	176	163	270
SURREY	143	221	245	247
SUSSEX	185	353	248	204
THAMES VALLEY	110	153	179	167
WARWICKSHIRE	194	233	130	149
WEST MERCIA	110	36	117	91
WEST MIDLANDS	362	485	822	902
WEST YORKSHIRE	813	822	757	604
WILTSHIRE	19	66	45	58
DYFED POWYS	37	18	28	29
GWENT	39	30	20	37
NORTH WALES	371	195	302	259
SOUTH WALES	255	363	283	281

Number of authorised firearms officers (AFOs)

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
TOTAL	6,262	6,064	5,776	5,763
AVON & SOMERSET	150	135	116	84
BEDFORDSHIRE	46	45	48	53
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	77	73	56	71

Number of authorised firearms officers (AFOs)

	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
CHESHIRE	75	74	81	89
CLEVELAND	80	75	85	80
CITY OF LONDON	73	74	73	72
CUMBRIA	98	94	92	87
DERBYSHIRE	77	81	80	69
DEVON & CORNWALL	119	100	108	115
DORSET	66	67	57	59
DURHAM	101	101	86	102
ESSEX	228	195	180	184
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	77	72	71	80
GTR MANCHESTER	218	240	219	202
HAMPSHIRE	111	100	87	94
HERTFORDSHIRE	52	44	46	47
HUMBERSIDE	97	102	96	96
KENT	136	136	113	93
LANCASHIRE	143	132	138	129
LEICESTERSHIRE	90	85	69	68
LINCOLNSHIRE	78	80	91	87
MERSEYSIDE	96	103	78	84
METROPOLITAN	1,977	1,940	1,805	1,823
NORFOLK	110	114	104	109
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	75	77	51	56
NORTHUMBRIA	114	109	125	99
NORTH YORKSHIRE	59	66	66	64
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	116	137	136	131
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	100	98	92	100
STAFFORDSHIRE	81	67	71	63
SUFFOLK	98	90	90	80
SURREY	71	72	62	48
SUSSEX	131	118	120	141
THAMES VALLEY	187	185	156	180
WARWICKSHIRE	54	45	50	51
WEST MERCIA	129	130	125	131
WEST MIDLANDS	93	83	111	110
WEST YORKSHIRE	110	117	116	132
WILTSHIRE	89	71	71	78
DYFED POWYS	65	61	77	62
GWENT	68	66	57	60
NORTH WALES	92	67	83	75
SOUTH WALES	155	143	138	125

Number of operations involving armed response vehicles (ARVs)

	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
TOTAL	8,276	8,179	11,574	11,818
AVON & SOMERSET	78	56	173	215
BEDFORDSHIRE	172	253	172	269
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	54	36	43	45
CHESHIRE	330	441	523	337
CLEVELAND	25	16	13	63
CITY OF LONDON	24	30	39	131
CUMBRIA	21	27	53	45
DERBYSHIRE	167	152	253	363
DEVON & CORNWALL	52	121	76	32
DORSET	69	155	182	180
DURHAM	67	31	57	66
ESSEX	244	206	165	176
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	44	39	140	166
GTR MANCHESTER	173	302	528	406
HAMPSHIRE	90	84	116	108
HERTFORDSHIRE	44	65	81	129
HUMBERSIDE	181	136	273	170
KENT	58	64	89	132
LANCASHIRE	250	177	192	185
LEICESTERSHIRE	144	195	292	232
LINCOLNSHIRE	141	324	470	367
MERSEYSIDE	466	75	974	547
METROPOLITAN	1,812	1,380	1,667	2,447
NORFOLK	210	192	157	186
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	21	35	25	90
NORTHUMBRIA	397	655	1,349	1,204
NORTH YORKSHIRE	40	54	60	67
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	232	207	333	397
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	214	103	221	280
STAFFORDSHIRE	131	136	208	241
SUFFOLK	101	103	116	160
SURREY	110	192	225	240
SUSSEX	172	245	189	111
THAMES VALLEY	108	108	174	167
WARWICKSHIRE	158	194	104	31
WEST MERCIA	98	26	100	81
WEST MIDLANDS	138	243	563	592
WEST YORKSHIRE	787	785	609	565
WILTSHIRE	15	48	43	39
DYFED POWYS	37	18	28	29
GWENT	27	17	16	16
NORTH WALES	354	155	265	198
SOUTH WALES	220	298	218	253

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 12 February 2004

TRANSPORT

London Transport Grant 2004–05

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty): The GLA Transport Grant for 2004–05 has today been determined by the Secretary of State for Transport at £2,224,536,000, following consultation with the Mayor of London. This grant is a block grant provided by the Government to Transport for London to support improvements to London Underground and other transport services in London.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Higher Education Reform

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Charles Clarke): I stated in the House on 27 January that I was commissioning a report to examine the gateways into the professions. I am pleased to announce the appointment of Sir Alan Langlands, VC of the University of Dundee, to lead this work.

Sir Alan will act as an independent person to oversee the report which will examine how the public sector and the professions can sustain and improve recruitment opportunities for graduates, especially those who do not qualify for the full £3000 support, and, to make recommendations to Ministers on action that can be taken by the employing organisations to provide clear accessible gateways for all graduates who want to pursue such careers and which will benefit the recruitment needs of these sectors.

The report will cover mainly the public sector but will also look at good practice in the private sector and will include those who work in a professional capacity in the voluntary sector. Additionally there will be reference groups established, one for each sector and with voluntary sector representation on each group.

On the public sector, the report will analyse support that is currently available, (through bursaries, golden hellos, fee payment and loan write-offs) its effectiveness and future plans for post autumn 2006. Furthermore it will assess whether these (plus any changes) are likely to continue to work after autumn 2006; and whether there are any gaps in what is available which are likely to create recruitment and retention problems.

On the private sector, it will research current and possibly international practice on incentives for graduates, and assess how employers might respond in a variable fees environment;

I am asking Sir Alan to start this work after Royal Assent this year with the aim of reporting to me by mid-2005.

Building Schools for the Future

The Minister for School Standards (Mr. David Miliband): I am pleased to announce further details about "Building Schools for the Future" (BSF), including the projects in the first wave, the establishment of Partnerships for Schools, and the publication of the exemplar designs of schools of the future. This follows my statements of 26 February and 26 June 2003.

These developments start to deliver the Government's long-term commitment to a programme of rebuilding and renewal to ensure that secondary education in every part of England has facilities of 21st century standard.

We are announcing today the projects that will make up wave 1 of "Building Schools for the Future", starting in 2005–06. Wave 1 will benefit from government support for £2.2 billion capital investment in our secondary schools. We hope to announce further waves during 2004.

The projects in wave 1 are:

the four BSF pathfinder projects, which were announced last March: Bradford, Bristol, Greenwich-Lewisham-Southwark (joint project), and Sheffield;

plus ten further projects. These are: Knowsley, Leeds, Manchester (phase 1 of their proposal only), Newcastle, Newham, Solihull, Gateshead/South Tyneside (joint project), Stoke-on-Trent, Sunderland, and Waltham Forest; and

two reserve projects: Lancashire (Burnley) and Leicester City.

That is a total of 16 projects involving 19 local education authorities (LEAs) and substantial investment in some 180 schools.

BSF must get off to a flying start, to ensure that the considerable benefits that this programme promises are delivered: greater impact on educational standards and local deprivation, improved procurement, and better value for money. Our focus on delivery will be enhanced through the creation of a new agent to support delivery— Partnerships for Schools. The Department will manage Partnerships for Schools jointly with Partnerships UK, and with the participation of 4ps (Public Private Partnerships Programme), to co-ordinate the national delivery of the programme and provide support for LEAs. This body aims to build on the many strengths of the LEAs, and will respond to their needs, with a view to complementing rather than duplicating their role.

At the national level, Partnerships for Schools will:

support the Government in selecting areas to receive investment; establish best practice in delivery, both nationally and locally; and

develop innovative and effective models of procurement, which help create long-term public-private partnerships (PPPs), reduce the burden of bid costs, and streamline procurement through standard documentation.

We are also publishing today a compendium of exemplar designs of the schools of the future. The designs are examples of high-quality school design by 11 leading architectural firms who have created some of the country's best modern buildings. The designs will help LEAs and schools to develop their educational vision and requirements, and will drive consistently high standards across all LEAs. They are not a straitjacket, but an inspiring basis for thinking about future provision.

The resulting designs are innovative and inspirational. The compendium contains the aims of the programme, detail of the designs themselves, as well as some of the common emerging themes across the designs. The designs balance the need to design schools for today—for example, incorporating concepts from extended schools and special needs—with innovative ideas for tomorrow—such as the potential teaching models of ICT- rich open learning spaces in all-through schools or schools-within-schools.

Further information can be found in the launch document which has been published today, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

LSC Annual Report and Accounts 2002–03

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Ivan Lewis): I would inform the House that the Learning and Skills Council for England has today published its annual report and accounts for the period to 31 March 2003. Copies have been placed in the House Libraries.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

National Land Information Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): The Government have today accepted the recommendation of the review of the National Land Information Service Central Government Stakeholder Group that the Group should be abolished. Central Government Departments will continue to support the development of the National Land Information Service (NLIS) through direct contact and by liaising with each other to ensure a joined up response to issues relating to NLIS. A copy of the review has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

Courts Boards

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): Courts boards will be a means of ensuring local involvement in the way in which courts are run. They will work with the new unified courts agency, which will integrate the management of the courts within a single agency to replace the Magistrates Courts Committees and the Court Service. Courts boards will provide a vital local input, to ensure that the courts' administration is run in a way that meets the needs of their areas. We intend to appoint the first members to courts boards towards the end of 2004, so that the boards will run in shadow form before the new agency is launched in April 2005.

The consultation paper "C*ourts boards: constitution and procedures"* sought views on how appointments should be made to courts boards and the procedures by which they should operate. The consultation period ran from 25 September 2003 to 5 January 2004 and 141 responses were received.

A post-consultation report for the paper courts boards: constitution and procedures will be published on 26 February. The report will set out the Government's decisions on how courts boards will be set up, in the light of the responses received to consultation. It will also inform regulations which will be laid before Parliament on that day.

I am keen for courts boards to be set up in shadow form during this year so that the boards may then consider the draft business plans for the first year of the new unified courts agency.

PRIME MINISTER

Senior Salaries

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The 26th Report of the Review Body on Senior Salaries, which makes recommendations about the pay of the senior civil service, senior military personnel and the judiciary, is being published today. Copies are in the Vote Office and the Library of the House. I am grateful to the Chairman and Members of the Review Body for their work.

The main recommendations of the Review Body for the senior civil service are:

an increase from 1 April 2004 of 2 per cent. to the pay ranges for each of the senior civil service pay bands below permanent secretary;

a range of base pay awards from 0 to 9 per cent. depending on performance;

a minimum unconsolidated bonus payment of 3 per cent. or £2,500, whichever is the higher, for those making the greatest contribution; and

an uplift to the pay range for permanent secretaries resulting in a new range of £121,100 to £256,550; the uplift is broadly equivalent to the increase proposed to the pay ranges for the senior civil service pay bands below permanent secretary.

The main recommendation of the Review Body for the senior military is:

an increase from 1 April 2004 of 2.8 per cent. in the value of all points on the incremental pay scales for senior military officers

The main recommendation of the Review Body for the judiciary is:

an increase from 1 April 2004 of 2.5 per cent. in judicial salaries.

The Government have decided to accept these recommendations. Their cost will be met within existing departmental expenditure limits.

The Review Body has also recommended that broad salary linkage between its remit groups should be achieved from now on by maintaining general equivalence in salary levels at the top of the structures only. The Government will be considering this.

Pay increases for Members of Parliament and Ministers are linked automatically to the increase in pay bands for the senior civil service. Their pay entitlement will therefore increase by 2 per cent. from 1 April 2004.

HEALTH

Maternity Services (Select Committee Report)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): The Government's response to the Health Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2002–03 on Provision of Maternity Services, the

Eighth Report of Session 2002–03 on Inequalities in Access to Maternity Services, and the Ninth Report of Session 2002–03 on Choice in Maternity Services (Cm 6140), has been published today. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The Government recognise that women and their families currently benefit from high standard maternity services provided by dedicated and hardworking National Health Service staff.

The Government are committed to maintaining and building on the quality of maternity services by tackling inequalities as a matter of priority and promoting choice for all women and their families.

David Bennett

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The report of the independent inquiry into the death of David 'Rocky' Bennett is published today. David Bennett's death is a tragedy and my sincere sympathies go out to his family for their loss. He died five years ago in a medium secure unit after being restrained by staff. The report raises a number of very important issues. We have a duty to understand these and act upon their findings.

It is essential that the health service is safe for service users and staff. Following a meeting with David Bennett's family, we established the Cross-Government Group on the management of aggression and violence. We have just published positive practice standards for local services, and have established a programme of work with the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) to help improve the organisation and quality of training for staff. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence will shortly publish guidance in this area.

I accept that there is discrimination in the NHS, both direct and indirect. There is no place for racism or discrimination. It is unacceptable; it contradicts the basic value of equity that is the cornerstone of the health service. In mental health we have already made a start by publishing "*Delivering Race Equality*" which outlines a national framework for local action.

Behaviours and processes that have grown up in mental health services mean that there is particular inequity in the provision of care and outcomes for people from black and minority ethnic groups. We are committed to rooting out racism, tackling these inequalities and ensuring that the experience of people from black and ethnic minority groups is improved. The consultation feed back on "*Delivering Race Equality*" and the recommendations of the David Bennett inquiry report will help inform future action.

We also need senior, committed, leadership to ensure that change happens. This is why Professor Kamlesh Patel, chair of the Mental Health Act Commission, has been asked to direct the national programme of work, including the work of the National Institute for Mental Health. A national steering group, co-chaired by Lord Victor Adebowale, from Turning Point will also inform us. I will expect quarterly reports on progress.

The National Institute for Mental Health has been set up to help improve local mental health services. Its largest programme is focused on black and minority ethnic mental health. It covers:

better quality and more intelligently used information;

more appropriate and responsive services; and,

increased community engagement.

In order to ensure that change is sustainable we need to work with local communities to help us understand their needs and to build their confidence. To help achieve this we will fund 80 community engagement projects and appoint 500 community development workers to make a direct connection between local people, staff and services.

In "*Delivering Race Equality*" we are absolutely committed to ensuring that staff have the knowledge and skills to enable them to deliver services to, and in partnership with, all groups in their community. This includes race equality training.

Last but not least, when serious incidents occur, we know that good communication is essential. Families and carers need to be involved, and different agencies must communicate more effectively with each other. We are therefore working with the Home Office and police to improve local liaison; and with the NPSA to reform the process of independent inquiries. This will help to ensure that families and carers can be more closely engaged, and that staff and services learn the lessons they need to. We deeply regret the death of David Bennett. We are committed to making change happen.

NHS Charges

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): We shall lay before the House regulations to increase national health service charges in England from 1 April 2004. There will be a cash increase in the prescription charge of 10 pence from £6.30 to £6.40 for each quantity of a drug or appliance dispensed.

The cost of prescription prepayment certificates will rise to £33.40 for a four month certificate and £91.80 for an annual certificate. These offer savings for those needing more than five items in four months or 14 in one year.

Prescription charges are expected to raise some £462 million for the NHS in 2004–05.

Charges for elastic stockings and tights, wigs and fabric supports supplied through the hospital service will be increased similarly.

The maximum patient charge for a single course of dental treatment begun on or after 1 April 2004 will increase from £372 to £378.

The prescription charge increase is the same as in the previous five years and is well below the current level of inflation. The other increases are in line with this percentage increase.

The majority of optical voucher values will increase by 2.5 per cent. to help children and people on low income with the cost of spectacles or contact lenses. In recognition of the greater costs which people with high prescription lenses may face, vouchers for these individuals will increase by 10 per cent. We will continue to monitor the costs of high prescription lenses over the coming year to see if further changes are necessary.

NHS charges and optical voucher values in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a matter for the devolved administrations.

Details of the revised charges and optical voucher values have been placed in the Library.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 (Renewal)

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy): On 21 September 2003, I announced a review of the effectiveness of the temporary provisions of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. Principally these relate to 50:50 recruitment. That review was initiated as part of the Secretary of State's statutory duty, under section 47 of that Act, both to have regard to progress made towards securing that membership of the police and police support staff is representative of the community in Northern Ireland, and to consult the Policing Board, when making a decision as to whether those temporary provisions should be renewed. The review ended on 19 December, but I have continued to meet with political parties on this issue until recently.

As a direct result of these temporary provisions, steady progress towards a more representative police service has been achieved. The number of Catholic applications to the PSNI has been unprecedented, averaging 35 per cent. over six competitions. As a direct result, the proportion of Catholic officers in the regulars has increased from around 8 per cent. to almost 14 per cent. Increase in Catholic representation among civilian staff has been slower, in part because 50:50 does not apply to all civilian recruitment competitions, only to those where six or more are sought in the same field at the same time.

A number of issues were raised during the review about the efficiency of the 50:50 recruitment process and its fairness to candidates. I am looking seriously at those issues and my officials are liaising with the police to assess the scope for potential improvements. The Government is keen to move forward with increasing the representativeness of the police service. The more progress we can make now, the sooner it may be possible to put an end to a procedure that is difficult for many people to accept, but justified in our view for the greater good.

For these reasons, and after considering carefully all the views expressed during the consultation period, the Secretary of State has now decided that those temporary provisions should be renewed for a further three years. That is why I am today laying before Parliament the draft Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 (Renewal of Temporary Provisions) Order 2004. There will be an opportunity to debate the Order in both Houses of Parliament.

Prison Service Pay

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy): The report of the Prison Service pay review body on the pay of governor and officer grades in the Northern Ireland Prison Service for 2004 has been published today. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Both the Secretary of State and I welcome the recognition in the report of the work of staff in the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

The Review Body has recommended a 2 per cent. increase (part consolidated— part non-consolidated) on existing rates of pay for the 12 month period commencing 1 April 2004.

I have decided to accept the recommendations and implement the award in full.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Pay

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): The 2004 Report of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body has been published today. Copies of the Report are available in the Vote Office and the Library of the House. I wish to express my thanks to the Chairman and members of the Review Body for their clear and wide-ranging report.

The AFPRB has recommended an increase in basic military salary of 2.8 per cent. for the majority of personnel and 3.2 per cent. for certain Privates and Lance Corporals (those on the lower pay range). The AFPRB has also recommended increases in the rates of Specialist Pay (eg Flying Pay, Submarine Pay, Diving Pay and Hydrographic Pay), and in accommodation charges. The AFPRB has also recommended a 3.2 per cent. increase to rates of longer separated service allowance and longer service at sea bonus which are designed to compensate for separation.

The additional cost to the defence budget will be £196M. This will be met within existing departmental expenditure limits.

The AFPRB's recommendations are to be accepted in full, with implementation effective from 1 April 2004.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Support

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith): Progress in new scheme performance has continued to be made and future improvement is expected. The number of poor families now benefiting from the new child maintenance premium has almost tripled in the last quarter. More than three times as many non-resident parents have now made a first payment of maintenance as at the end of the previous quarter. In each of the three months during the quarter, the agency made more maintenance calculations on the new scheme than it made on the old scheme in the same months last year.

In clearing cases so far, the ratio of those reaching calculation to those that have been closed in the new scheme remained 6:4, compared with the ratio of 4:6 in the old scheme. During the third quarter, the agency cleared nearly as many cases as it did in the first two quarters combined, taking the total number of clearances (calculations and closures) to over 100,000.

The Department continues to retain around 15 per cent. of each monthly payment due to EDS, the service provider, due to the continuing problems with the computer and telephony systems.

Technical issues continue to preclude reliable figures on compliance for the latest quarter. However, the agency is focusing more effort on compliance and is working on alternative mechanisms to derive this information.

The current accuracy (to the nearest penny) level is estimated at 83 per cent. against a 90 per cent. target. We expect to see the target reached as further improvements are made to the computer support and staff become more and more familiar with the new scheme.

Because of continuing issues with the new computer's management information systems, we are still unable to provide a reliable throughput figure for the latest quarter. Alternative methods for measuring throughput are being developed.

Summary of Agency Performance to December 2003

Agency Performance	*Quarter 1 Mar—Jun 2003*	*Quarter 2 Jul—Sep 2003*	*Quarter 3 Oct—Dec 2003*	*Scheme to Dec 2003*
Applications received	73,582	78,982	85,306	237,870
Applications cleared	12,648	38,583	49,453	100,684
of which: Maintenance Calculations	6,671	23,857	29,672	60,200
Closures	5,977	14,726	19,781	40,484
First payments made through the Agency	461	5,164	11,473	17,098
First Child Maintenance Premium payments made	77	3,314	6,173	9,564

Agency Performance (March 2003 to June 2003)

	Mar-03	*Apr-03*	*May-03*	*Jun-03*	*Total In Quarter*
Applications Received	3,444	25,228	19,951	24,959	73,582
Applications Cleared	43	1,616	3,441	7,548	12,648
of which: Maintenance Calculations	10	721	1,810	4,130	6,671
Closures	33	895	1,631	3,418	5,977
First Payments Made Through the Agency		*136 for 1st 3 months		325	461
First Child Maintenance Premium Payments Made		*17 for 1st 3 months		60	77

Agency Performance (July 2003 to September 2003)

	Jul-03	*Aug-03*	*Sep-03*	*Total In Quarter*	*Scheme To Sep-03*
Applications Received	28,897	23,761	26,324	78,982	152,564
Applications Cleared	10,526	11,923	16,134	38,583	51,231
of which: Maintenance Calculations	6,922	7,199	9,736	23,857	30,528
Closures	3,604	4,724	6,398	14,726	20,703
First Payments Made Through the Agency	1,032	1,752	2,380	5,164	5,625

Agency Performance (July 2003 to September 2003)

	Jul-03	*Aug-03*	*Sep-03*	*Total In Quarter*	*Scheme To Sep-03*
First Child Maintenance Premium Payments Made	267	1,596	1,451	3,314	3,391

Agency Performance (October 2003 to December 2003)

	Oct-03	*Nov-03*	*Dec-03*	*Total In Quarter*	*Scheme To Dec-03*
Applications Received	35,724	28,841	20,741	85,306	237,870
Applications Cleared	19,832	16,011	13,610	49,453	100,684
of which: Maintenance Calculations	11,807	9,975	7,890	29,672	60,200
Closures	8,025	6,036	5,720	19,781	40,484
First Payments Made Through the Agency	3,978	3,503	3,992	11,473	17,098
First Child Maintenance Premium Payments Made	2,108	1,915	2,150	6,173	9,564

Notes:

1. Figures marked with * are not available on a monthly basis for this period.

2. Figures for August and September differ from those previously published as information relating to Northern Ireland Child Support Agency has now been removed. All figures now exclude Northern Ireland.

3. A proportion of cases that have a maintenance calculation in place may already be receiving payment directly, but will not be reflected in the figures shown above.

4. Figures for Child Maintenance Premium payments include an estimate of the number of parents who receive the premium by way of a disregard to their Income Support/income-based Jobseekers Allowance. The disregard has been added from August as data was not available prior to this, and has also been included into the scheme to date figure.

Average weekly child support maintenance payments to parents with care

	1 Qualifying Child	*2 Qualifying Children*	*3 Qualifying Children*
Average Weekly Payment	£31.56	£45.40	£48.70

Note:

Figures are for December 2003 only and are calculated as the total amount received and allocated divided by the number of cases.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Regional Assemblies

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): The Regional Governance White Paper, Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions published in May 2002 announced that elected regional assemblies would:

> "have the power to request the Secretary of State to call in for his or her determination strategic planning applications which were not consistent with the regional spatial strategy" (paragraph 4.34).

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister proposes to strengthen these arrangements so that they have the same effect as those in London. We propose to give elected assemblies a power to direct local planning authorities to refuse strategic planning applications on similar grounds to those in London. The Mayor of London can exercise this power where he or she considers it would be:

> "contrary to the SDS [Sustainable Development Scheme] or prejudice its implementation, or otherwise be contrary to good strategic planning in London" (paragraph 6.12 of Government Office for London Circular 1/2000).

European Parliamentary, Local Authority and Greater London Authority Elections 2004

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): Following consultation with the Electoral Commission and other key stakeholders the following instruments have now been made and laid before Parliament:

> The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Rules 2004, SI No. 223
>
> The Local Election (Parishes and Communities) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Rules 2004, SI No. 224
>
> The Greater London Authority Elections (Amendment) Rules 2004, SI No. 227

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have also laid before Parliament, following consultation, the following draft Instruments on which we are seeking the approval of the House:

> The Local Elections (Ordinary Day of Election 2004) Order 2004
>
> The European Parliamentary Elections Regulations 2004
>
> The Representation of the People (Combination of Polls) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004
>
> The Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2004
>
> The Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2004

As a package of measures these instruments would:

> give effect to the Government's announced intention to move the date of the English local authority and Greater London Authority elections in 2004, so that they take place at the same time as the European Parliamentary elections, and make consequential amendments relating to:
>
> > the term of office of councillors affected by the postponement;
> >
> > the 'six month period' during which by-elections need not be held;
> >
> > the date of annual meetings for authorities affected by the postponement.
>
> make provision for the conduct of European Parliamentary elections in Great Britain and Gibraltar;
>
> provide revised rules for the combination of polls at all elections and also referendums pursuant to the Local Government Act 2000; and
>
> provide for other amendments to the Greater London Authority election rules.

A summary of the responses we received during consultation on the draft instruments has been made available in the Libraries of the House.

Supporting People Programme 2004–05

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): The Government are today publishing the Independent Review of the Supporting People programme, which was conducted by Eugene Sullivan of RSM Robson Rhodes LLP. Copies of the review will be available in the Libraries of both Houses and on the ODPM website www.spkweb.org.uk.

The Government is allocating £1.801 billion for the Supporting People programme in 2004–05, which will fund housing related support services for over 1 million vulnerable people including victims of domestic violence, older people and those with mental health problems. The programme funds an estimated 250,000 units of housing related support, compared to fewer than 100,000 in 2000.

On the basis of the Independent Review, local authorities will be expected to make efficiency savings of up to 2.5 per cent. in 2004–05, with a proportion of the savings reallocated to local authorities to fund services that have come on stream in 2003–04 and are reaching unmet need.

The Supporting People programme began in April 2003, drawing together nine different funding programmes, including Transitional Housing Benefit. Following significant late growth in costs last year, the government commissioned the Independent Review to look at value for money and the variation in unit costs and services across local authorities. The Review has found that there are wide variations in unit costs between authorities, and that £1.8 billion is too much to pay for the legacy services. It recommends that efficiency savings can be made, but that the pace of change needs to be managed to avoid difficulties for service users and small providers.

The Government are concerned to ensure that value for money is achieved and that valuable services for the vulnerable are sustained. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are therefore asking the Audit Commission to undertake detailed inspections in a series of local authorities with high unit costs, alongside their routine inspections, to inform the Spending Review and funding allocations for 2005–06.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are also beginning today a consultation on the grant conditions for Supporting People in 2004–05, which we are proposing to keep broadly the same as 2003–04. The consultation ends on 24 March. We are writing to local authorities to inform them of their allocations.

Rent Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): Responsibility for the Rent Service, an executive agency, is to transfer from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to the Department for Work and Pensions. The Deputy Prime Minister has agreed with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (DWP), that this transfer will take place with effect from 1 April 2004.

The reasons for transferring the Rent Service (TRS) to the Department for Work and Pensions are that the vast majority of TRS's work (around 90 per cent.) is on

rental valuations to determine how much housing benefit (HB) claimants should receive. Although this is carried out primarily for local authorities, the policy and legislative lead rests with DWP. TRS, which will retain its executive agency status on transfer, will be better placed to assist with taking forward the on-going work on housing benefit reform—announced by the Secretary of State for DWP in October 2002—if it is operating within DWP.

Only a small percentage of TRS's current workload (around 10 per cent.) relates to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's responsibilities on fair rents. The transfer will not prevent the Agency from contributing to ODPM's policy objectives, as the role and functions of TRS remain the same.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is consulting with the trade unions involved in this change of Departmental responsibilities.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prison Service Pay

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): The Third Report of the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) on the pay of in-charge governors and operational managers, prison officers and related grades in England and Wales in 2004 has been published today and copies placed in the Library.

The PSPRB have recommended a 2.4 per cent. basic increase to pay rates for prison officer and related grades and 1.5 per cent. to in-charge governors and other operational managers. Nearly all in-charge governors and other operational managers receive performance payments on top of their basic award, which contribute to earnings growth for them above the level of inflation.

The Home Secretary has decided that the recommendations will be implemented in full, with effect from the operative date of the award of 1 April 2004.

The key recommendations of the report are:

A 2.4 per cent. basic increase to pay rates for prison officer and related grades from 1 April 2004;

A 1.5 per cent. basic increase to in-charge governors and other operational managers from 1 April 2004;

Revised local pay allowance rates introduced from 1 April 2004:

from £3,800 to £4,000 per annum for the "top" rate

from £3,000 to £3,100 per annum for the "high" rate

from £2,500 to £2,600 per annum for the "middle" rate

the £1,100 per annum "lower" rate continues unchanged

Required hours addition for operational managers to be increased by the basic award figure 1.5 per cent. ;

Healthcare specialist allowance increased by 2.4 per cent. but all others frozen at current rates. Staff new to jobs attracting specialist allowances to get them at the current rates;

All other allowances, such as Tornado, bedwatch, on call, dirty protest, increased by 2.4 per cent.

TREASURY

Financial Services

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly): As I set out in my written statement of 5 January, *Official Report*, column 1W, Lord Penrose delivered the report of his inquiry into Equitable Life to the Treasury on 23 December.

Further to that statement and my written answer to the Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire on 26 January, *Official Report*, column 110W, I wish to inform the House that named individuals from Equitable Life's current senior management and their advisers have now been shown limited extracts of Lord Penrose's report, to assist the Treasury with its public functions. The Treasury is also taking independent actuarial advice.

Consequently, the report, or extracts from it, are now the subject of examination by Treasury officials and their legal and actuarial advisers, named FSA and DTI officials, the Serious Fraud Office, and a small number of Equitable Life's current senior management and their advisers.

As I set out in my statement of 5 January, the Treasury intends to publish the report in full as soon as possible. I will continue to keep the House fully informed.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 26 January 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Badgers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the total population of badgers in the UK; and in which areas the population is greatest. [148650]

Mr. Bradshaw: English Nature advises that there are likely to be in the region of 300,000 to 400,000 badgers in Great Britain. This figure is derived from a National Badger Survey which took place in the mid-1990s.

The survey also reported that there had been a 77 per cent. increase in badger numbers between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s. The increasing number of applications received by Defra for licences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (up 50 per cent. since 1999) suggest that this trend is continuing.

Badgers densities are highest in the south-west of England, with high densities present throughout southern counties, the west midlands and Wales.

The Department has been funding the Winter Mammal Monitoring Project which is being carried out by the Mammal Society and the British Trust for Ornithology. This is a pilot study intended to develop a multi-species terrestrial mammal monitoring system. The project is still at the pilot stage—but is intended in the future to provide valuable data on the abundance of mammal species, including badgers. Early findings confirm the pattern of distribution report in the National Badger Survey.

Full details of the badger survey findings are published in: "Changes in the British badger population, 1988 to 1997" by G. Wilson, S. Harris and G. McLaren (1997), published by the People's Trust for Endangered Species (ISBN 1 85580 018 7).

Results from the Winter Mammal Monitoring Project are available online at: http://www.bto.org/survey/special/mammal_results.htm

Birds of Prey

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of birds of prey eating and preying on other *(a)* birds, *(b)* mammals and *(c)* the food chain. [149443]

Mr. Bradshaw: A Raptor Working Group was set up in 1995, jointly chaired by the DETR and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, following increasing concerns from grouse moor owners and racing pigeon fanciers over the impact of rising raptor populations on bird numbers. The recommendations from the Raptor Working Group's final report, published in 2000, provides the basis for and inform efforts to find an effective and acceptable solution to the problems caused by birds of prey.

Work is now being taken forward by the country conservation agencies, and other organisations. In addition, English Nature has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Moorland Association on addressing the issue of raptor predation in the uplands.

Implementation of the Working Group's report's recommendations in Scotland and Wales is a matter for the devolved Administrations. A paper on progress in implementing the recommendations of the Raptor Working Group Report was presented to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, and noted by them, in September 2003. The paper is now publicly available on their website at: http://www.jncc.gov.uk/management/committee/papers03–09/jncc03N06.pdf

Copies of the Raptor Working Group report are available from the Library of the House.

Birds of prey are usually the top predators in their food chains. As with other predatory species, populations of birds of prey are normally heavily influenced by their prey populations rather than the other way around. The available evidence suggests that recovering populations of birds of prey are not responsible for recent declines in some songbirds and that other factors related to habitat change and the intensification of farming are mainly to blame. Although there is little specific information on the impact of birds of prey on mammal or other prey populations in the UK, the same general principle applies and population declines driven solely by predation are highly unlikely. Healthy bird of prey populations can exist only where their main prey species are sufficiently abundant.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether wild deer are responsible for the spread of TB to cattle. [148655]

Mr. Bradshaw: In Great Britain, there is very limited evidence that deer have been responsible for transmitting tuberculosis to cattle. Wild deer in GB have generally been considered a sentinel or 'spill-over' host of infection in cattle and other wildlife, rather than the cause of it. Whether any wild deer populations (of any species) may constitute a reservoir of TB will depend upon the prevalence of TB, density and ecology of the hosts and the pathology that TB shows in those species.

Defra has funded a survey of wildlife in the Southwest of England by the Central Science Laboratory. The first phase established whether *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*—the causative organism for bovine tuberculosis) was present in a number of wild mammal species, including deer. *M. bovis* has been confirmed in five of the six established wild and feral species of deer in GB. The second phase of the survey (due to end March 2004) is to estimate prevalence of *M. bovis* in those species where it is found, by carrying out a more targeted and extensive sampling.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the incidence of TB in cattle by 2008 if current measures are continued and there is no increase in activity by her Department; and what her projections are for costs of compensation for slaughter of cattle reactors in that period. [148657]

Mr. Bradshaw: Our latest assessment shows that bovine TB restrictions affected 5 per cent. of cattle herds (5,181 herds) in Great Britain at some point between January and November 2003. At any one point in time there are about 3 per cent. of herds under restriction.

The average annual increase in the number of animals slaughtered as a result of TB control measures between 1990 and 2001 was 20 per cent. It is too early to say whether this long-term trend has been altered by the interruption of the testing programme due to Foot and Mouth disease in 2001, and the priority testing of high-risk herds once the programme resumed.

In 2002/03 we paid out £31.1 million in TB compensation. With no new changes in policy, or disease dynamics, we could theoretically expect a 20 per cent. year on year increase in the compensation bill.

However, the TB programme will not remain static over the next four years. We recently consulted on proposals to rationalise compensation arrangements for all notifiable diseases including bovine TB and we will shortly be consulting on proposals for a new TB strategy and options for controlling the geographical spread of the disease in the short term. The key challenge for Government and the farming industry will be to work together to reduce the overall economic impact of bovine TB.

Departmental Advertising

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how much her Department spent on advertising in each year since its creation; [144885]

(2) how much her Department spent on marketing in each year since its creation. [144887]

Margaret Beckett: The Department does not maintain separate records of its expenditure on advertising. The expenditure for publicity by Defra's Communications Directorate, includes marketing, advertising, publications, events, shows and direct information literature mailings, and is recorded for the financial years since Defra's creation in June 2001 as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	6.6
2002–03	4.7
2003–04	[1]3.7

[1] Estimated.

This includes communication on a very wide range of matters of interest, both necessary and beneficial to the public, the wide range of industries in which Defra has an interest, together with local government, voluntary organisations and other bodies.

Large Combustion Plant Directive

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* process and *(b)* timescale is for reaching a final United Kingdom position on implementation of the Large Combustion Plant Directive. [150231]

Alun Michael: We are continuing to assess the potential economic impact of the introduction of the Directive on the UK coal industry, and on the coal-fired electricity generating industry which is its major market, using both internal analyses and independent research. This will enable us to take a final decision on the right implementation approach for the UK in spring 2004.

Energy Efficiency

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding economic means to promote energy efficiency. [149747]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The Department holds regular discussions with the Treasury at both official and ministerial level regarding fiscal instruments and how they can continue to be developed and employed to improve the energy efficiency of the economy.

The Treasury and Defra published last year a joint consultation "Economic Instruments to improve household energy efficiency: consultation document on specific measures". The consultation closed on 24 October with over 80 responses, which are being actively considered to help inform policy development.

Fallen Stock

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress towards the setting up of the National Fallen Stock Scheme, with particular reference to the financial structure of the company concerned. [150067]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* Good progress is being made in setting up the Scheme. The Company which will run the Scheme will be limited by guarantee and operate on a not for profit basis. Initially, it will be wholly government owned and obtain funding to carry out its functions from government aid and farmer subscriptions.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department has spent on research into the development of selective fishing techniques in each of the last five financial years. [150308]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has spent the following amounts on research into the development of selective fishing techniques in each of the last five financial years:

	£
2002–03	320,305
2001–02	211,930
2000–01	211,308
1999–2000	141,604
1998–99	166,429

Flooding

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the role of the Environment Agency in the planning process with regard to the building of houses on flood plains. [149921]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The Environment Agency has the lead role in providing advice on flood issues both at a strategic level and in relation to planning applications as stated in Planning Policy Guidance on "Development and Flood Risk" (PPG25). The Agency works with local planning authorities to help ensure inappropriate development does not take place in the flood plain.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to change the minimum one-in-75 year flood standard issued by the Government. [148280]

Margaret Beckett: No such 'standard' has been issued by the Government. In project appraisal guidance the Department sets out a range of indicative standards depending on land use. For intensively developed urban areas, the indicative target range is from 1 in 50 to 1 in 200 for river floodplains and 1 in 100 to 1 in 300 for areas at risk of coastal flooding. It should be emphasised that many houses situated behind defences with a nominal standard of, say, 1 in 50, will individually have a risk of flooding that is significantly less than this.

The project appraisal guidance will be subject to review and public consultation later this year but there are no current plans to change the range of indicative standards.

GM Crops

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the recent research by Dr. Charles M. Benbrook on the impact of GM crops on pesticide use in the United States. [149875]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) considered the report by Dr. Benbrook as part of its deliberations on the results of the Farm Scale Evaluation (FSE) trials. ACRE'S advice on the FSE results was published on 13 January and we are now considering this.

Snares

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what guidance is issued to gamekeepers and others involved in the setting of snares; [148451]

(2) what checks are in place to ensure that the law is being enforced with respect to the setting of snares; [148452]

(3) what obligation the United Kingdom has under the Berne Convention on conservation of European wildlife and their habitats with respect to snaring; [148453]

(4) when she expects to publish the results of the review of the law relating to the use of snares; [148454]

(5) what representations she has received about the illegal use of snares; and if she will make a statement. [148455]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protects all wild birds and certain animals from killing and taking. Under Section 11 of the 1981 Act free running snares are permissible provided that the snare is not placed in such a way to allow injury to any animal listed on Schedule 6 of the 1981 Act, which includes badgers. Section 11(3) makes it an offence to set in position, or knowingly cause or permit to set in position, any snare which is of such a nature and so placed as to be calculated to cause bodily injury to any wild animal. The snare must also be inspected at least once every 24 hours, so as to avoid any animal held in the snare suffering unnecessarily through starvation or dehydration. All non-target species must be released from the snare.

Free-running snares are not considered an indiscriminate means of either capture or killing provided they are set correctly and are checked every 24 hours. They are designed to be a restraining device that is intended to slacken, not continually tighten, thus not causing bodily injury.

The purpose of Section 11 is to expressly prohibit the use of indiscriminate means of capture and killing, in accordance with our international obligations, under the Bern Convention. Penalties for offences under Section 11, including not checking snares and not releasing non target species, include fines of up to £5000 and/or a custodial sentence of up to six months for each offence. The Police are the main authority for enforcing this area of legislation.

The Department does not issue advice to gamekeepers on how snares should be set. However, the British Association of Shooting and Conservation has published a Code of Good Practice and the Game Conservancy Trust includes detailed guidance on best practice with all snares that they sell.

It is considered that a complete ban on the use of snares might encourage the use of more dangerous, indiscriminate and illegal alternatives, such as poisons. We have no current plans to alter the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with regard to snares. It is important that until viable alternatives are available to land managers the humane use of traps and snares is improved. Officials have undertaken a stakeholder consultation to assess current practice; identify best

practice and methods that cause concern; as well as request suggestions for the improvements of snare operation and any potential alternative methods. The consultation period ended on the 13 November. Officials will be collating the comments over the next few months. A copy of the pre-consultation paper can be found on the Defra website at http://defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/snares/letter.htm

Officials received 101 responses to the stakeholder consultation.

Sudden Oak Death

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to ensure that gardeners are aware of the *(a)* symptoms and *(b)* procedures for reporting cases of sudden oak death. [149114]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government believe that the public should have as much information as possible about *Phytophthora ramorum*, the disease known as sudden oak death in the USA. Information about the disease and how to report it is available on the Defra website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/oak.htm. An explanatory leaflet and poster are also available and copies will be placed in the Library of the House. Officials are in regular contact with interested organisations, for example the Royal Horticultural Society and the Horticultural Trades Association, so that information about the disease, its symptoms and guidance on reporting any suspected cases of infection can be disseminated to their members. This information has also appeared in a number of recent press and magazine articles.

Because the symptoms are difficult to distinguish from those caused by other pathogens, we are not relying on public awareness but are carrying out our own surveys of garden centres and nurseries in order to detect infected plants. Buyers of host species have been advised to check plants before purchase for symptoms of the disease and to contact their supplier if they subsequently develop.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many checks were carried out at ports of entry in order to prevent the import of plants infected with sudden oak death in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [149235]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra's plant quarantine surveillance programme is focused at nurseries, garden centres and other places where plants are received, rather than at ports of entry. Until May 2002 host plants of "P. ramorum" in intra-community trade were not subject to any specific plant health controls. The following numbers of inspections were carried out in the last three years on rhododendrons and viburnums, the two plant genera which have most often been found to be infected in Europe:

	Nurseries, garden centres etc.			*At ports*
	UK	*Other EC*	*Non-EC*	
2001	224	95	17	0
2002	3190	1147	43	1
2003	9081	2667	20	11

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what instructions she gave to port authorities to prevent the import of plants infected with sudden oak death in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [149236]

Mr. Bradshaw: Inspectors from the Department's Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI) have authority to detain, inspect and sample plants at ports to ensure that they meet import requirements and are not carrying disease. These inspections relate to a wide range of plant pests and pathogens, not just "Phytophthora ramorum" Any consignment found to be infected or not to have the correct documentation is destroyed. In carrying out these duties, the Inspectorate may call on help from Customs, port health authorities and port operators.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice she has issued for *(a)* gardeners and *(b)* foresters to prevent the spread of sudden oak death. [149237]

Mr. Bradshaw: Both Defra and the Forestry Commission have published posters and placed information on their websites covering the horticultural and forestry sectors respectively.

Disease management measures are currently focused on nursery and garden centres to ensure that gardeners and other customers can be confident that they are purchasing disease-free plants. There is, as yet, no evidence that the disease is present on any trees in forests but a survey of 1000 woodland sites is currently underway and we hope, by April, to have a better understanding of the status of the disease in the wider environment. This work will enable us to ensure that appropriate advice is made available to foresters. In addition, the Forestry Commission is advising those engaged in routine forestry operations to take basic hygiene precautions to minimise the possibility of accidentally spreading diseases such as "P. ramorum".

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of *(a)* trees and *(b)* plants recover from infection with sudden oak death; and which species are most likely to recover. [149238]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is at present no evidence, from the UK or anywhere else, to indicate that any plants or trees infected by Phytophthora ramorum might recover. It is for this reason that the current measures require all infected material to be destroyed, either by burning or deep burial. Symptoms of "Phytophthora ramorum" can affect both leaves and stems. In some plants only leaves are affected and in these cases it is possible that plants could recover following the removal of affected leaves. Methods of eradicating infection from specimen plants and of protecting new growth from reinfection are being investigated as part of Defra and the Forestry Commission's programme of research into this disease.

Sporulation of the fungus on certain shrubs which are themselves relatively unaffected, showing only minor symptoms, is believed to have played a key role in the epidemiology of the disease in California.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether she has consulted the national authorities of other countries on the treatment of sudden oak death; and if she will make a statement; [149239]

(2) what information she has received from other countries about the treatment of sudden oak death. [149253]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is regular dialogue between plant health authorities in the UK and those in other countries affected by or at risk from "Phytophthora ramorum". It was as a result of this collaboration that the link was first made, even before the pathogen was identified, between the death of trees in California and symptoms seen on rhododendrons on the continent.

Exchange of information on Phytophthora ramorum takes place between officials and scientists in EU Member States on a regular basis, particularly within the framework of the Standing Committee on Plant Health. It was as a result of discussion in this forum that EU-wide emergency measures against the introduction and spread of "Phytophthora ramorum" were introduced in November 2002. They were reviewed by the Standing Committee on 11 December last year and it was agreed that they should continue. An EU funded research project on Phytophthora ramorum started this month and a second project is due to start in April. Both are being co-ordinated by UK scientists and involve consortia with members from 6 to 21 countries.

We have also had regular discussions with officials and scientists in the United States. A US delegation visited in November 2003 and a conference is being organised in the USA in March at which scientists and regulators from a number of countries, including the UK, will discuss developments in research and management of the disease.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the results of research that her Department has commissioned into sudden oak death; what other research into sudden oak death her Department has assessed; and what research projects commissioned by her Department are on-going. [149248]

Mr. Bradshaw: The results of research conducted on this disease will be published over time. However some preliminary results are already available on the Defra website http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/phnews/csl.htm. The Forestry Commission are conducting complementary research as part of the same overall programme.

As this is a relatively new disease the research commissioned in the UK following its discovery in October 2001 is still on-going. Within Europe, the majority of research is UK based. Germany and the Netherlands are also investigating aspects of the disease. Defra and Forestry Commission have good links with scientists in these countries and also with scientists in the USA facilitating a regular exchange of scientific information. As the pathotypes of the disease, the host plant species and the environmental conditions differ between the UK and the USA results may not be directly applicable and therefore must be considered carefully.

Defra are currently funding four research projects titled:

1. Comparison of "Phytophthora" ramorum populations from Europe and USA in support of pest risk assessment, management and policy.

2. Non-tree host range and diagnosis of "Phytophthora ramorum" in support of pest risk assessment, management and policy.

3. "Phytophthora ramorum" epidemiology: sporulation potential, dispersal, infection and survival.

4. Epidemiology of natural outbreaks of "Phytophthora ramorum".

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what treatments are available for sudden oak death. [149250]

Mr. Bradshaw: The only known method of eliminating "Phytophthora ramorum" is the removal and destruction of infected plant material. Currently approved fungicides have a suppressive effect, which masks symptoms rather than eradicating the pathogen from infected plants. However, research at Defra's Central Science Laboratory, funded by the Horticulture Development Council, is looking at a range of substances to evaluate their effectiveness in eradicating infection and preventing reoccurrence.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what organisations in the UK she has consulted on the treatment of sudden oak death; and if she will make a statement. [149251]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is in regular contact with the Royal Horticultural Society, the Horticultural Trades Association and the National Farmers Union about developments in the treatment of "Phytophthora ramorum".

Moreover, on 13 October, the Department hosted a meeting on "Phytophthora ramorum" at the Central Science Laboratory in York which was attended by over 65 people representing a range of interested organisations.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) which species are vulnerable to sudden oak death; [149252]

(2) what plant types are most susceptible to sudden oak death. [149261]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows.

Species found to be naturally infected with "Phytophthora ramorum" in America or Europe

Host	*Common name*	*Family*
Ornamentals		
Arbutus menziesii	Madrone	Ericaceae
Arbutus unedo	Strawberry tree	Ericaceae
Arctostaphylos manzanita	Manzanita	Ericaceae
Camellia spp.	Camellia	Ericaceae
Hamamelis virginiana	Virginian witch hazel	Hamamelidaceae
Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon	Rosaceae
Kalmia latifolia.	Mountain laurel	Ericaceae
Leucothoe spp.	Leucothoe	Ericaceae
Lonicera hispidula	California honeysuckle	Caprifoliaceae
Pieris spp.	Pieris	Ericaceae

Species found to be naturally infected with "Phytophthora ramorum" in America or Europe

Host	*Common name*	*Family*
Pittosporum undulatum[1]	Victorian box	Pittosporaceae
Rhamnus californicus	Californian coffeeberry	Rhamnaceae
Rhamnus purshianus[1]	Cascara	Rhamnaceae
Rhododendron	Rhododendron	Ericaceae
Rubus spectabilis[1]	Salmonberry	Rosaceae
Syringa vulgaris	Lilac	Oleaceae
Toxicodendron diversilobum[1]	Poison oak	Anacardiaceae
Trientalis latifolia	Western star flower	Primulaceae
Umbellularia californica	Californian bay laurel	Lauraceae
Vaccinium ovatum	Californian huckleberry	Ericaceae
Vaccinium vitis-idaea	Cowberry	Ericaceae
Viburnum spp.	Viburnum	Caprifoliaceae
Trees		
Abies grandis[1]	Grand fir	Pinaceae
Acer macrophyllum	Big leaf maple	Aceraceae
Aesculus californica	Californian buckeye	Hippocastanaceae
Aesculus hippocastanum	Horse chestnut	Hippocastanaceae
Castanea sativa	Sweet chestnut	Fagaceae
Corylus cornuta[1]	Californian hazelnut	Betulaceae
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	Fagaceae
Lithocarpus densiflorus	Tan Oak	Fagaceae
Pseudotsuga menziesii	Douglas fir	Pinaceae
Quercus agrifolia	Coast live oak	Fagaceae
Quercus cerris	Turkey oak	Fagaceae
Quercus chrysolepsis	Canyon live oak	Fagaceae
Quercus falcata	Southern red oak	Fagaceae
Quercus ilex	Holm oak	Fagaceae
Quercus kellogii	Californian black oak	Fagaceae
Quercus parvula var. shrevei	Shreve's oak	Fagaceae
Quercus rubra	Red oak	Fagaceae
Taxus baccata	Yew	Taxaceae
Sequoia sempervirens	Coast redwood	Taxodiaceae

[1] Hosts from which the pathogen has been cultured and/or detected by DNA tests, but pathogenicity not confirmed by laboratory.

Plants most likely to be potential hosts based on previous results of laboratory inoculation tests

Plant species	*Common name*	*Family*
Ornamentals or wild shrubs		
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi	Bearberry	Ericaceae
Eucalyptus	Eucalyptus	Myrtaceae
Fuchsia spp.	Fuchsia	Onagraceae
Gaultheria spp.	—	Ericaceae
Lonicera spp.	Honeysuckle	Caprifoliaceae
Olea europea	Olive	Oleaceae
Photinia arbutifolia	—	Rosaceae
Prunus spp.	Nectarine; cherry; Portuguese and cherry laurel	Rosaceae
Ribes sanguineum	Current	Grossulariaceae
Rosa canina	Dog rose	Rosaceae
Sambucus spp.	e.g. elder	Caprifoliaceae
Symphoricarpus albus	Snowberry	Caprifoliaceae
Vaccinium myrtillus	Bilberry	Ericaceae
Vaccinium x intermedium	Bilberry-cowberry hybrid	Ericaceae
Trees [1]		
Abies procera	Noble fir	Pinaceae
Acer spp.	Maple/sycamore	Aceraceae
Carpinus	Hornbeam	Betulaceae
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana	Lawson's cypress	Cupressaceae
Fraxinus excelsior	Ash	Oleaceae
Malus sylvestris	Crab apple	Rosaceae
Picea sitchensis	Sitka spruce	Pinaceae
Picea abies	Norway spruce	Pinaceae
Quercus spp.	Oaks	Fagaceae
Tilia cordata	Small-leaved lime	Tiliaceae
Tsuga heterophylla	Western hemlock	Pinaceae
Ulmus glabra	Wych elm	Ulmaceae

[1] Based on either sapling or mature log tests, and/or leaf tests. Tests may have been done using wound inoculation and may not predict natural susceptibility of unwounded tissue. Sapling susceptibility does not necessarily predict mature tree susceptibility. (NB. The table is not completely comprehensive, but includes only those considered to have most potential for natural susceptibility)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's budget is for the prevention of the spread of sudden oak death in 2003–04. [149254]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra's 75 Plant Health and Seeds Inspectors are already employed for around 20 per cent. of their time on inspection and surveillance duties related to Phytophthora ramorum, known in the USA as sudden oak death. Therefore, although there is no specific budget allocation, this amounts to an expenditure of approximately £1.8 million in 2003–2004.

In response to the growing number of findings of this pathogen in England and Wales, Defra is redeploying around 20 additional staff to assist the Inspectorate in undertaking extra inspections at production nurseries, wild planting areas and ports of entry. They will be supplemented by the recruitment of six additional full time Inspectors for 2004–05. This is part of a package of measures announced on 4 December.

The Forestry Commission has diverted existing resources into a survey of woodlands thought to be at the highest risk of infection. This will cost in the region of £45,000.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many individual sites have reported incidents of sudden oak death in the recent outbreak. [149255]

Mr. Bradshaw: Although P. ramorum is a 'notifiable disease', it is difficult to identify visually, and symptoms are similar to those caused by other organisms. We do not rely on reports in order to locate outbreaks. Defra's Plant Health and Seeds Inspectors are carrying out inspections of all known nurseries and garden centres which trade in susceptible plants. They are also surveying other areas where susceptible plants are established (e.g. rhododendrons in historic gardens), and co-ordinating with the Forestry Commission inspectors who are surveying woodlands. Since the first finding was confirmed in April 2002, outbreaks at individual sites in England and Wales have now reached 302.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cases of sudden oak death have been reported in each of the last five years. [149256]

Mr. Bradshaw: Phytophthora ramorum was first described as a new species in October 2001 and the first outbreak in the UK was not confirmed until April 2002. 130 cases of infection were confirmed in 2002 and 171 in 2003.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she intends to increase the amount of money spent by her Department on research into sudden oak death. [149257]

Mr. Bradshaw: During this financial year additional money was allocated to the budget responsible for funding research on Phytophthora ramorum. The budget for the coming year has also been increased. The need for research on different plant health risks is regularly reviewed and any issues of redeployment of effort or funding addressed as necessary.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in which soil types sudden oak death has been found to flourish. [149258]

Mr. Bradshaw: From limited findings on plants growing in soil in the UK (as opposed to container grown nursery stock), it is hard to draw any firm conclusions. Many of the most susceptible host plants of Phytophthora ramorum are members of the Ericaceae family which are known to prefer acid soil.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money has been spent by her Department on research into sudden oak death. [149259]

Mr. Bradshaw: To date Defra has commissioned research projects to a total value of £391k.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the risk to *(a)* nurseries, *(b)* gardens and *(c)* the countryside from sudden oak death. [149262]

Mr. Bradshaw: A Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) for the organism causing sudden oak death in California was first conducted in the UK by Forest Research in September 2000.

In November 2001 the causal organism was described as a new species, Phytophthora ramorum. Since that time research has been commissioned both in the UK and in the USA, the results of which are being used to develop the PRA, along with field observations from the UK, Europe and the USA.

The PRA has assessed the risks posed to naturally and experimentally susceptible plant species, including those raised on nurseries, grown in gardens and occurring naturally in the countryside.

The assessment is updated as scientific knowledge about this disease increases. Copies of the risk assessment were placed in the Library of the House on 13 February 2003 and updates have since been placed on the Defra website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/pra.htm.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* of her Department's staff and *(b)* sub-contractors employed by her Department are researching sudden oak death. [149264]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has commissioned several research projects into the disease at the Central Science Laboratory (an executive agency of Defra), Forest Research (an agency of the Forestry Commission) and ADAS Consulting. In total there are approximately 22 staff working on these research projects. Around 20 per cent. of the work of the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate is currently spent on surveys aiming to determine the distribution of the pathogen and take action against it. This represents the equivalent of approximately 20 staff. A further twelve staff have been transferred from elsewhere in the Department to assist with the surveys.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she has taken to encourage research into the *(a)* effect and *(b)* spread of sudden oak death. [149265]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since June 2002 the Department has commissioned research to the value of about £391k to investigate aspects of the biology of the disease including its effect and means of transmission between plants. The research programme is co-ordinated with, other research funded by the Forestry Commission and the Horticultural Development Council in order to maximise the scientific information obtained about this disease. Approximately 20 per cent. of the work of Defra's Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate over the last year has been directed at surveillance for this pathogen.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department operates a compensation scheme for those affected by sudden oak death. [149266]

Mr. Bradshaw: Plant disease campaigns over many years have not incorporated compensation for the destruction of affected plants. The one exception was the campaign against beet rhizomania disease from 1987 to 2001 when compensation was paid from an industry funded scheme. Our judgment is that the limited resources of the plant health service are better deployed in detecting and identifying outbreaks, and in carrying out research on risks and risk management measures. We have recently received an approach from industry organisations wishing to discuss possible risk-sharing mechanisms to avoid disproportionate losses to individual enterprises when action has to be taken against plant pests or diseases. We welcome this opportunity to explore the available options.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Adam Smith Institute

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what work his Department has commissioned from the Adam Smith Institute in the last five years; and how much each of these projects cost. [146938]

Hilary Benn: Pursuant to the response given to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetlands on 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 518W which gave the figures for the original value of contracts awarded to Adam Smith International Ltd. The following table sets out the current value of these contracts, made up of the original value plus any increases or extensions since. All contracts with Adam Smith International Ltd. have been awarded and managed in line with DFID's standard procurement procedures.

	Project title	*Current value (£) (original contract value plus cost of any increases or extensions)*	*Country*
1999	PR Unit Support for Parastatal Sector Reform Commission (PSRC)	430,625	Tanzania
1999	Privatisation Project Phase 3 and 4 Managing Consultant	1,718,736	Guyana
1999	Privatisation Agency Support Project Consultancy	560,752	Zimbabwe
1999	Technical Assistance for Public Enterprise Reform in Orissa	3,667,571	India
1999	Assistance to the Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Department	9,131,555	West Bank and Gaza
1999	Additional Support to the Privatisation Board	106,241	Bangladesh
1999	UK-Ireland Privatisation and Regulation Study Tour	11,145	Tanzania
1999	Medium Term Programme of Capacity Building for PURC	1,559,960	Ghana
1999	Initital Support to the Budgetary Processes of the Government of Macedonia	44,315	Macedonia
2000	Rehabilitation of Cyclone Damaged Lift Irrigation Points in Orissa	1,296,327	India
2000	Seminar on Export Credits and Developing Countries	102,594	United Kingdom
2000	Lead Adviser to Parastatal Sector Reform Commission (PSCR)	229,966	Tanzania
2000	Russia Trade Policy Project	1,199,986	Russia
2001	Conference on Disinvestment	70,000	India
2001	Support for Public Sector Undertaking Reforms & Social Safety Net in Madhya Pradesh	80,000	India
2001	PSCR: Water Privatisation and Regulation Study Tour	54,924	Tanzania
2001	Communications Film for Department of Disinvestment	89,500	India
2001	Consultants for Standards, Technical Regulatory Barriers Programme	92,870	Global (non project specific)
2002	Trade Training for DFID Staff	20,075	United Kingdom
2002	Pilot Training and Capacity Building in International Watercourse Law	151,008	Kyrgyz Republic
2002	Trade Training for DFID Staff—Bangkok	32,328	United Kingdom
2002	Support for Capacity-building in the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank	3,277,815	Afghanistan
2003	Support Services for Public Enterprise Restructuring in South Africa	6,363,435	South Africa, Republic of
2003	Support to Water Sector Regulation by PURC—Ghana	1,079,100	Ghana
2003	Andhra Pradesh Economic Restructuring Programme—Public Enterprise Reforms, Phase II	416,435	India
2003	Economic Support within 1st Military Division HQ Basra.	55,510	Iraq
2003	Economic Development within 1st Military Division HQ Basra.	119,848	Iraq
2003	Support to the Office of the Prime Minister and to the Cabinet Office.	100,400	West Bank and Gaza
2003	ITD—DFID Staff Training	288,685	Global (non project specific)
2003	Asia Trade Consultancy	44,200	United Kingdom
2003	International Lawyer within 1st Military Division HQ Basra.	131,868	Iraq
2003	Economic Support to Coalition Provisional Authority South (CPAS)	111,255	Iraq
2003	Secondment of Negotiations Support Staff to the Office of Prime Minister.	75,800	West Bank and Gaza
	Legal Adviser within Coalition Provisional Authority South (CPAS)	72,925	Iraq

Note:
DFID contracts have been subject to untied international competition since 2001, using the EU Public Procurement Regulations.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 518W, on the Adam Smith Institute, how much his Department has spent on work undertaken by the Adam Smith Institute in each of the last 10 years. [148671]

Hilary Benn: Information on payments is only available for the last six years. Payments to Adam Smith International Ltd. were as follows:

Adam Smith International Ltd.

	£
1998	1,547,082.92
1999	3,494,546.98
2000	5,450,964.35
2001	9,612,801.56
2002	7,050,473.82
2003	7,289,363.19

The above does not include payment data for any lower value locally let contracts. This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what outcomes have been monitored arising from contracted services provided to his Department by the Adam Smith Institute and its subsidiaries. [146959]

Hilary Benn: All DFID projects are monitored to ensure contracted services make the intended contribution to project outcomes. We have not made special arrangements for consultancy advice from Adam Smith International Ltd.

Advertising and Information

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by his Department has spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04 (estimated); and if he will make a statement. [149621]

Hilary Benn: Our expenditure on Publicity, which forms a part of our effort to raise development awareness and understanding of international development issues in the UK, has been as follows:

Year	*£*
1995–96	568,775
1996–97	579,916
1999–99	399,755
1999–2000	674,531
2000–01	1,484,281
2001–02	1,286,053
2002–03	[1]1,300,000
2003–04	[2]850,000

[1] Estimate
[2] Provisional forecast figure

We do not hold a separate advertising budget, The majority of advertising relates to recruitment advertising in newspapers and journals. Figures for the four calendar years are as follows:

Year	*Number*
2000	751,972
2001	1,208,191
2002	914,571
2003	871,246

Afghanistan

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many refugees have returned to Afghanistan from refugee camps in *(a)* Iran and *(b)* Pakistan; and how many remain. [150648]

Hilary Benn: At the beginning of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR's) repatriation programme in April 2002, UNHCR's estimate of the Afghan refugee caseload in Iran was 1.5 million. Since then, over 500,000 people have returned to Afghanistan. Only five per cent. of these are believed to have originated in camps.

In Pakistan, the refugee caseload was estimated at 3.5 million in March 2002. Over 1.5 million were repatriated in 2002 and over 300,000 returned in 2003. The bulk of returnees so far, has consisted of refugees living in urban areas rather than camps. The 1.5 million remaining in Pakistan almost all live in camps.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many Afghans in refugee camps belong to women-headed households. [150649]

Hilary Benn: The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as yet have no specific figures for the number of Afghans in refugee camps belonging to women-headed households. The most detailed information they can currently offer is that approximately 50 to 60 per cent. of refugees in camps in Pakistan are women and that five to 10 per cent. of these are of adult age. In Iran, only five per cent. of refugees live in camps, and of these, only 38 per cent. are women.

UNHCR, however, anticipate that more detailed information will become available over the next year. Elections in Afghanistan are planned for June 2004 and UNHCR is currently discussing ways to carry out voter registration for Afghan refugees with the Government of Pakistan and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). This should start to shed more light on the make-up of the refugee population. UNHCR also has plans for a separate census, which the Government of Pakistan have asked them to carry out in order to get a better picture of the remaining refugee caseload in Pakistan. It is expected that this will be carried out after voter registration of refugees to avoid confusion. UNHCR believes this will provide an insight, among other things, into the number of women-headed households and their dependents.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150285]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID occupies two offices in Central London, at 1 Palace street, SW1 and 20 Victoria street SW1. The sizes of these are 15,910 sq m and 1,178 sq m respectively. We have no other offices in Central London.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the Rwandan Government concerning military activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [149824]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

We discuss regularly with the Government of Rwanda the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Since the withdrawal of the Rwandan Defence Force (RDF) from the DRC in October 2002 we have received several unconfirmed reports from a variety of sources about the continued presence of RDF personnel in eastern DRC. The UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) has investigated these reports but has found no evidence to substantiate them. The Rwandan government, with whom we have raised these allegations, have denied they have forces in the DRC.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the number of internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, broken down by region. [149974]

Hilary Benn: The most recent statistical data available from the Relief Web, puts the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) at over three million. These IDPs are mainly in eastern DRC.

The breakdown by numbers is as follows:

Democratic Republic of Congo	*Number*
Kinshasa	41,000
Equateur Province	168,000
Kasai Occidental	72,500
Kasai Oriental	72,500
Katanga Province	412,000
Maniema	234,000
North Kivu	1,209,000
South Kivu	413,700
Orientale	791,000

Departmental Funding

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the organisations funded by his Department in each of the last three years which have received *(a)* less than £1 million, *(b)* less than £750,000, *(c)* less than £500,000, *(d)* less than £250,000 and *(e)* less than £100,000. [148548]

Hilary Benn: This information is not readily available in respect of every type of organisation and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, the funding DFID has provided to UK based civil society organisations within each of the financial thresholds over the last three financial years has been placed in the Library in a document entitled "Funding to UK Civil Society Organisations—Written Parliamentary Question 148548".

EU Aid Projects

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list current EU aid projects. [149980]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A breakdown of European Commission official development assistance in 2002 by country/region and sector, and details of individual project commitments can be found in the "Annual Report 2003 from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the EC Development Policy and the Implementation of External Assistance in 2002"; a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Copies of the EC's Country and Regional Strategy Papers can be obtained from its website (www.europa.eu.int).

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many staff in his Department devote a proportion of their working time to involvement in EU aid projects, broken down by grade. [149981]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's European Union department currently has a complement of 15 staff, headed by a Senior Civil Service Grade 5, and including four middle management grades and 10 junior management and administrative officers.

In addition, staff across the range of departments within DFID are engaged on work related to the EC's development assistance programmes. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by grade.

Global Fund

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the study by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine of the performance of the Global Health Fund. [148644]

Hilary Benn: As a board member of the Global Fund, we want to see that it clearly demonstrates its effectiveness as an instrument to tackle these three terrible diseases.

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine's (LSHTM) study showed that there is commitment to achieving the goals of the Global Fund and that it has had a positive effect in attracting new partners to the Fund. It also highlights the need for improved communication between countries and the Global Fund, and the Country Coordination Mechanisms. It shows the need for harmonisation of funding flows, a good financial management system and planning process and alignment of Global Fund activities with countries' own systems and processes. We are working closely with the Global Fund on all these issues.

DFID supports the role of independent evaluators and their contribution to improving performance through sound analysis. We recognise that such evaluations should be forward looking and form part of the Global Fund's overall monitoring and evaluation strategy.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support he provides to programmes in the Great Lakes region of Africa that educate HIV-positive men about treatment for their condition. [149911]

Hilary Benn: DFID is supporting work on HIV in Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC. Our support to Burundi and Rwanda through the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa (IPAA), totalling £4.15 million for Burundi and £2.95 million for Rwanda over a three-year period, includes support for the education of HIV-positive men.

In the DRC, we have been supporting projects run by Médecins sans Frontières and Population Services International (PSI), which also cover the education of HIV-positive men. We plan to further increase our support to the fight against HIV/AIDS as an identified priority in DFID's recently published Country Engagement Plan for the DRC.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with *(a)* non-governmental organisations and *(b)* the UN concerning provision for AIDS orphans in Africa. [149819]

Hilary Benn: Meeting the needs of the growing number of orphans and vulnerable children in Africa is a challenge that the Department for International Development is determined to address effectively. DFID is continuing its work and discussions with the United Nations Joint Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) who are co-ordinating other development agencies and NGOs to develop: treatment programmes to prolong the lives of parents; free access to education and enhanced support to the families and communities caring for orphans and vulnerable children.

DFID is working with NGOs in a number of countries. In Zimbabwe, DFID is providing support for orphans and vulnerable children and child headed households through its NGO feeding programme. In addition, a bilateral programme with the Zimbabwe Red Cross and John Snow International is providing food to households affected by AIDS (including child-headed households) and some orphanages. We are also starting work with a faith-based organisation in South Africa (the Church of the Province of Southern Africa) to reduce stigma, improve home-based care and care for orphans and vulnerable children.

The launch of the UK's "Call for Action on HIV/AIDS" (On World Aids Day 1 December 2003) marked the first step in the intensification of this Government's efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS. On World Aids Day I hosted a meeting with NGO's on the UK's "Call for Action" and a new UK Strategy for HIV/AIDS. The issue of how to respond to the growing number of orphans and children made vulnerable by AIDS was raised during this meeting. We will be consulting further with NGOs on this important issue as part of our consultation process for the UK Strategy planned for publication in July 2004.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has for ensuring the adequacy of healthcare systems in countries likely to *(a)* obtain and *(b)* use antiretroviral drugs for treatment of AIDS. [149858]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is committed to increasing access to treatment as part of a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS, and welcomes the WHO/UNAIDS target to get three million people on treatment by 2005. The UK will provide £12.5 million to the World Health Organisation in 2003–04 to support its work, including '3 by 5'. We have supported WHO to make the strengthening of health services a key part of their strategy to reach the '3 by 5' target. As treatment programmes are expanded it will be essential to invest in health systems in order to ensure that services for HIV, including voluntary counselling and testing and the provision of treatment, and other health services, are of good quality and accessible by poor communities and particularly women. This includes better co-ordination of public, private and NGO treatment initiatives. We also support community involvement in health service delivery as a well-informed civil society has been shown to be essential in the sustainability of comprehensive health systems.

DFID has provided £1.5 billion since 1997 to the strengthening of health systems in developing countries and we see this as an essential element of the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We are working with partners to build sound healthcare systems as the cornerstone of efforts to accelerate progress to achieve the Millennium Development Goals; to improve maternal and child health and reduce the impact of HIV and other major communicable diseases. The UK was a prime mover in setting up the High Level Forum on Health MDGs, which was held in Geneva in January 2004 and at which developing and donor countries discussed concrete actions to increase health service capacity to meet international development goals. DFID also supports the integration of HIV/AIDS into wider health sector policies and national poverty reduction strategies.

Infant Mortality

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the result has been of the support provided by his Department to the Africa Regional Office of the World Health Organisation for malaria and childhood illness activities. [148554]

Hilary Benn: DFID has agreed an £18 million, six-year project of support to WHO Africa Regional Office in 2002 and it is now at the early stages of implementation. We reviewed progress in 2003 and felt that that the project was well on track. All the countries supported under the project having developed Roll Back Malaria (RBM) and Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) plans.

Countries supported under the project have been able to use their malaria control plans to make applications to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM). The plans have helped GFATM approve and release significant malaria grants for six countries in the region. WHO has established an inter-country team for the region, which has responded to a number of emergencies such as flood assessments in Malawi and Mozambique. At the same time it has helped to develop country capacity through training and strengthening health systems.

The IMCI strategy is being implemented in most countries of the region and seven are now implementing it in more than 50 per cent. of their districts. There have been major achievements in improving health worker skills, demonstrated through Health Facility Surveys and Multi-Country Evaluations. Attention will now be focused upon strengthening some of the health systems issues in the delivery of IMCI.

Finally, the WHO's Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) itself has used the project to increase its institutional capacity and has recruited additional staff to work on both RBM and IMCI.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the involvement of his Department has been in international forums which form strategies to reduce child mortality, with particular reference to *(a)* the Child Survival Working Group and *(b)* the Saving Newborn Lives Initiative. [148555]

Hilary Benn: It is generally accepted that a significant improvement will be needed if, the MDG target to reduce under five mortality rates by two thirds by 2015 is to be achieved globally. Challenges include: the HIV/AIDS epidemic; economic decline and persistent poverty; inequality; under-resourced and poorly functioning health systems; and lack of progress in reducing the number of deaths of newborn babies.

In addition to country-level work, the Department for International Development makes significant contributions to UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank, the World Health Organisation and other international and national civil society groups to support their efforts to improve both maternal and child health. We contribute to global initiatives such as the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization and Roll Back Malaria, which have helped revitalise interest in childhood diseases and substantially increased the resources directed to child health. We support implementation of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness Initiative with partners from the United Nations International Children's Fund, the World Health Organisation, the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development. This initiative is building the quality and quantity of child health care within countries. The UK is also part of the recently inaugurated High Level Forum on Health which plans to address challenges to achieving the health related Millennium Development Goals.

A Child Survival Partnership (formerly Working Group) is being proposed by a number of international agencies which will bring together national governments, international organisations, donors and civil society

"to galvanise action at the global and national level aimed at revitalizing efforts to reach the under five mortality MDG target".

The specific activities that the partnership will undertake have not yet been defined, although they are likely to include advocacy for increased resources to be devoted to child survival, and work to scale up cost-effective child survival interventions at country level. DFID has been asked to contribute to thinking on the partnerships structure and objectives. As with any new initiative, over time we will judge the level of our involvement on its ability to deliver on its objectives and contribution to meeting the MDG targets.

We have been working with the Saving Newborn Lives Initiative (a Save the Children US Gates Foundation funded project) and the World Health Organisation to develop a Framework for Neonatal Health, which will provide a series of practical and flexible tools to enable policy makers to develop coherent and integrated strategies to reduce newborn deaths.

DFID is also represented on the steering committee of the Partnership for Safe Motherhood and Newborn Health together with the World Bank, the WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, and other organisations.

Iraq

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the Department's role is in the allocation of Coalition Provisional Authority funds. [149035]

Hilary Benn: The Head of DFID's office in Baghdad is the UK voting member of the Programme Review Board, which approves Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) plans for expenditure from the Development Fund for Iraq. DFID secondees to the CPA also have a role, alongside US and other Coalition partners, in drawing up CPA expenditure plans. The US Government decide on the allocation of their own funding provided through the CPA.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many recent meetings officials from his Department have had with local Iraqi non-governmental organisations; and what the results of those meetings have been. [149982]

Hilary Benn: On average five to 10 Iraqi non-governmental organisations (NGOs) visit the DFID office in Baghdad each week (most NGOs prefer not to meet on their own premises). DFID has also sponsored several meetings, particularly on women's political participation and human rights, involving several hundred attendees, many of whom are from small Iraqi NGOs.

The issues raised by the NGOs range widely. One frequent topic is how best DFID and the coalition as a whole can support the development of Iraqi civil society. These discussions inform the development of DFID's strategy and our approach to funding. But many of the NGOs are embryonic and are simply seeking guidance on how to establish themselves properly. We are working with the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation and the Coalition Provisional Authority on a registration scheme for all NGOs in Iraq.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of humanitarian aid stockpiles in Iraq that have been *(a)* destroyed and *(b)* stolen since April 2003. [149983]

Hilary Benn: DFID is not aware of any DFID-funded NGO or UN humanitarian aid stockpiles being destroyed or stolen since April 2003. However, some of our regular partners have had problems with other stockpiles. A warehouse of International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Society goods funded by ECHO (and therefore 19 per cent. DFID-funded) was looted in April. The total stock was valued at approximately £280,000. An ICRC warehouse also suffered from looting during this period resulting in the loss of approximately £65,000 worth of stock as well as some vehicles being damaged or stolen.

In addition, there were small losses of some perishable foodstuffs and medicines under the UN Oil For Food programme, due to delays in transporting goods during and immediately after the conflict.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money his Department has provided to the office of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since the start of the conflict with Iraq to assist with its work in Iraq and neighbouring countries. [149984]

Hilary Benn: DFID provided £1.75 million to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to support its work in Iraq and neighbouring countries in preparedness for the conflict. No further funding has been provided to UNHCR since the conflict.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what progress has been made with the plan of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to assist the return of up to half a million Iraqi refugees; [149999]

(2) what progress has been made with plans to assist those displaced before the conflict in Iraq to return home. [150000]

Hilary Benn: Since the end of the conflict, United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has facilitated the return of relatively small numbers of Iraqi refugees. These include the voluntary return of over 4,000 Iraqi refugees who spent more than 12 years in the Rafha refugee camp in Saudi Arabia, and some 800 refugees from Iran.

UNHCR is not encouraging returns to Iraq because of insecurity in parts of the country, a lack of humanitarian access, and economic conditions that cannot support mass returns. However, UNHCR is supporting, where it can, the repatriation of people who actively seek to go back regardless of conditions inside the country. It appears that increasing numbers of refugees in neighbouring countries, particularly Iran, are choosing to return to Iraq without support.

Once conditions in Iraq improve, UNHCR plans to step up its work with the Iraqi authorities, the CPA, and governments in countries of asylum, as well as other United Nations agencies and NGO partners, to support the return of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). UNHCR has launched pilot projects for the return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs in the northern governorates of Erbil and Dohuk. These projects aim to provide shelter kits to returnee families and to upgrade water supplies for returnees and host communities.

An Iraqi Property Claims Commission is being set up to help resolve the claims of returnees whose property was confiscated under previous regimes. A new Ministry of Displacement and Migration has been established to manage issues relating to Iraqi refugees and displaced people.

Further information on UNHCR's work can be found at: http://www.unhcr.ch/welcome.htm

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the drugs of which there is a shortage in Iraq; and what conditions they are intended to treat. [150002]

Hilary Benn: The Iraqi Ministry of Health, the Coalition Provisional Authority and the World Health Organisation are working together on a comprehensive assessment of shortages of drugs, other medical supplies and equipment. This is expected to be complete by March.

Maternal Mortality

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action his Department has taken to improve *(a)* coverage of skilled care at delivery and *(b)* the use of emergency obstetric care to reduce maternal mortality in sub-Saharan Africa. [148512]

Hilary Benn: The Millennium Development Goals are central to the Department for International Development's work, including the goal to improve maternal health, and its associated target of reducing maternal mortality. Constraints to reducing maternal deaths in Africa are weak and under-resourced health systems and the general human resource crisis in the health sector.

Access to skilled care at birth and emergency obstetric care are main elements to prevent maternal deaths, and help prevent ill health and disability as a result of complications in pregnancy or childbirth. DFID's Public Service Agreement includes ambitious targets on increasing access to skilled attendance at birth. The Department's strategy includes: highlighting the issue internationally; support to countries to strengthen health systems and improve access to maternal and reproductive health services; and support for research and improved measurement and monitoring for safe motherhood. DFID is actively engaged in a new international partnership for Safe Motherhood and Newborn Health.

We support the maternal health strategies of African countries through safe motherhood projects, for example in Kenya and Malawi, health sector budget support and, indirectly, through general budget support. We also fund international multilateral agencies and international NGOs active in supporting maternal health programmes in Africa. Since 1997 we have committed approximately £1.5 billion to support health systems. Through our participation in the High Level Forum on health we are promoting, with the WB, WHO and others, a renewed effort to accelerate progress towards all the health related MDGs.

Middle East

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the implications for the work of humanitarian aid agencies of the information bulletin being issued to foreign nationals arriving in Israel which informs them that entry to territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority is forbidden without written prior authorisation from the Israeli Government and that entry to those territories without such written authorisation may result in legal action being taken; and what representations he is making to Israel on the issue. [149934]

Hilary Benn: The Government is aware of the information bulletin, which has been issued to foreign nationals arriving in Israel, and is seriously concerned at the possible impact of such restrictions on humanitarian

and other aid organisations working in the West Bank. It could seriously disrupt the supply of essential emergency provisions for the most vulnerable Palestinians. We have raised our concerns with the Israeli government and is exploring with our EU partners further avenues for doing so.

Pakistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many refugee camps in Pakistan are being run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. [149975]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provides full assistance (food, water, shelter, education and health care) in 13 new camps which opened after 11 September 2001. Just under 200,000 refugees reside in these new camps.

In addition, it is estimated that there are in the region of 200 old refugee settlements in Pakistan with a population of between 900,000 and 1 million. In these camps UNHCR provides assistance with health care and education.

Rwanda and Burundi

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid is being provided to *(a)* Rwanda and *(b)* Burundi (i) for development and (ii) to re-establish its justice system; and if he will make a statement. [148858]

Hilary Benn: Establishing a fair and effective justice system in Rwanda is crucial for the stability and prosperity of the country. The most immediate challenge is to process the more than 100,000 individuals currently in Rwandan prisons accused of genocidal crimes.

The UK Government has provided £715,000 for research into the efficiency and effectiveness of gacaca—the traditional justice system adopted by the Government of Rwanda to try those accused of genocidal crimes. This programme is managed by Penal Reform International (PRI). This financial year, the UK will also provide some £25 million to the Government of Rwanda as direct budgetary support. These funds support the implementation of Rwanda's PRSP, which highlights justice as a priority sector.

At the request of the Government of Rwanda, the Belgian Government leads donor activity in the justice sector. Other major donors in this sector include the Dutch Government (construction of gacaca courts), the Canadian Government (the administration of the Supreme Court), the European Union (rehabilitation of the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court), and the German Government (rehabilitation of judicial systems).

In the case of Burundi, the UK commitment in 2003–04 so far amounts to £11.62 million. Our programme consists of support to peace building and conflict resolution initiatives; and humanitarian assistance through the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organisations and other international agencies. We are also working with the Government of Burundi providing technical support and advice on their Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and on capacity building issues. We are looking at the possibility of assistance in collaboration with others in the area of electoral reform.

Beyond this, we have no specific plans for support to the justice sector. However, the European Commission, under their recently agreed National Indicative Programme for Burundi for the period 2003 to 2007, are developing a significant support programme in good governance including the justice sector.

Sudan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the levels of *(a)* fighting and *(b)* casualties in Darfur; and what they were in June 2003. [149998]

Hilary Benn: There is limited access to be able to accurately assess the situation in Darfur. Our Humanitarian Adviser is planning to visit the area this week, as well as eastern Chad.

We are very concerned about the situation in Darfur. NGOs in Chad are reporting an increase in numbers of wounded due to the aerial bombardments that are reported to have taken place. The latest UN information suggests that 600,000 people, out of a total population of about 6 million in Darfur, are currently displaced because of the conflict, with a further 90,000 refugees in Chad.

We are pressing all sides to re-establish a ceasefire and resume peaceful negotiations, to allow unfettered humanitarian access.

Think Tanks

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the *(a)* value and *(b)* purpose was of contracts entered into by his Department with independent think tanks or their subsidiary bodies since 1997, broken down by think tank or subsidiary body. [146958]

Hilary Benn: I have placed in the House of Commons Library a list of DFID consultancy contracts with think tanks. This does not include lower value contracts, details of which are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Uganda

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Uganda Presidential Peace Team. [149973]

Hilary Benn: The Presidential Peace Team (PPT) was formed in August 2002. It comprises a number of Acholi MPs, Army Officers, Government Ministers and officials. Between August 2002 and May 2003 the PPT was involved in a number of attempts to initiate dialogue with the LRA. However these were unsuccessful.

While the PPT still exists, our current assessment is that it is largely inactive, and therefore ineffective. A revitalised and suitably empowered PPT would be an

important component of an effective strategy to end the conflict. We have stressed this in our contacts with the Government of Uganda and will continue to do so.

World Food Programme (Southern Africa)

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what shortfall exists in the World Food Programme appeal from July 2003 for food aid in southern Africa; what impact the shortfall has had on the ability to deal with the humanitarian situation in the region; and what steps are being taken to make up the shortfall. [150106]

Hilary Benn: Latest figures from the UN indicate that, so far, WFP has secured 69 per cent. of food aid requirements for this year's Consolidated Appeal for southern Africa. DFID contributions have helped ease the most pressing food shortages in key countries, notably Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The European Commission has recently announced a $25 million contribution for WFP programmes in Zimbabwe.

DFID has been supporting the work of the Vulnerability Assessment Committees in affected countries in order to better understand needs and direct resources to them. Assessments will be carried out in Swaziland and Lesotho over the next few weeks and a fuller assessment of Mozambique's food security situation will be undertaken in March. We are awaiting the release of the urban vulnerability study, which was recently undertaken in Zimbabwe. All of these studies are being funded by DFID.

The UN is seeking funding from a range of donors for the remainder of the Southern African Consolidated Appeal. DFID continues to be the second biggest bilateral contributor of humanitarian aid to southern Africa.

World Trade Organisation

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many people made up the UK delegation to the World Trade Organisation ministerial conference in Cancun in September; and what the cost to public funds was of its attendance. [149112]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have been asked to reply.

There were 41 in the UK delegation to the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference held in Cancun last September.

Final accounts for the delegation are currently not available. Once the costs have been finalised, we will inform the House.

WALES

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much space, expressed in square metres, the Office occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150281]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office occupies 494.25 square metres in central London for the offices of civil servants. It has no office space in Greater London.

Higher Education Bill

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether, under the provisions of the Higher Education Bill, English universities will be able to charge top-up fees to students resident in Wales; and what assessment he has made of the funding shortfall if such fees are not charged. [150116]

Mr. Touhig: Subject to their having an access agreement with the Office for Fair Access English HEIs will be able to charge variable fees. Welsh domiciled students will be charged a variable fee on the same basis as English domiciled students.

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether, under the provisions of the Higher Education Bill, Welsh universities will be able to charge top-up fees to students resident in *(a)* England and *(b)* Scotland; and what assessment he has made of the funding shortfall if such fees are not charged. [150117]

Mr Touhig: The provisions of the Higher Education Bill transfer to the Assembly responsibility for student support for students resident in Wales and HE tuition fee levels.

The Assembly Education and Lifelong Learning Minister has given a commitment that variable fees would not be introduced in Wales during the lifetime of the second Assembly. This means no student from England or Scotland entering a Welsh Higher Education Institution in academic year 2006–07 will be charged a variable fee, for the duration of his or her course. Funding of Higher Education Institutions in Wales is a matter for the Assembly.

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether, under the provisions of the Higher Education Bill, students resident in England will have to pay up-front fees if attending a Welsh university; whether they will be entitled to claim bursaries while attending a Welsh university; and what assessment has been made of funding methods for such bursaries. [150118]

Mr. Touhig: Fee deferment is an integral part of the new package of student support for which the HE Bill provides. English domiciled students studying in Wales will be eligible for loans for fees from the Department for Education and Skills on the same basis as a English domiciles studying in England.

Bursary provision by English HEIs will be directly connected with the terms of access plans with the Director of Fair Access which permit them to charge variable fees. The Welsh Assembly has said that it will not introduce variable fees during the lifetime of the second Assembly, therefore Welsh Higher Education Institutions will not need to provide access bursaries on similar terms to those being provided in England.

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether, under the provisions of the Higher Education Bill, students resident in Wales will have to pay upfront fees if attending an English university; whether they will be entitled to claim bursaries while attending English universities; and what assessment he has made of funding methods for such bursaries. [150119]

Mr. Touhig: The Assembly has given a commitment that should tuition fee and student support powers be transferred from 2006, Welsh domiciled students studying in England will be eligible for a loan for fees and therefore will not have to pay upfront fees. It will be for English institutions to set out the details of their own bursary schemes, but we would expect these to be equally available to Welsh students.

Mr. Jon Owen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the estimated cost is of compensating universities in Wales for lost revenue if top-up fees are not charged. [150120]

Mr. Touhig: The Higher Education Bill will transfer to the Assembly the responsibility for student support for students resident in Wales and Higher Education tuition fee level.

The Assembly has given a commitment that Higher Education Institutions in Wales will not be disadvantaged by not being allowed to charge variable fees in 2006–07. The Assembly will meet the costs of this commitment.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Obesity

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were recorded as obese in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1990, *(c)* 1995, *(d)* 2000 and *(e)* each year since 2001; what steps he is taking to reduce these figures; and if he will make a statement. [150685]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is working with relevant departments and other agencies to tackle obesity through action plans on food and nutrition and physical activity.

Political Parties (Donations)

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his policy is on the exemption of political parties in Northern Ireland from *(a)* the requirement publicly to declare donations received from individuals, organisations and businesses and *(b)* statutory restrictions on accepting donations from foreign and anonymous sources. [150629]

Mr. Spellar: The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (Disapplication of Part IV for Northern Ireland Parties, etc.) Order 2001 exempted the Northern Ireland political parties from the requirement to comply with Part IV of the Act for four years. Part IV imposes restrictions on the source of donations so as to prohibit foreign and anonymous donations to political parties.

The Order expires February 2005. However, in line with a commitment made to Parliament during the passage of the Order, it is being reviewed ahead of that. The result of this review will be announced by way of a parliamentary statement.

TRANSPORT

Transport for London

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the reasons were for the change in the level of funding by his Department for Transport for London in 2005–06 compared with 2004–05; [149579]

(2) what assessment he made, when allocating funds to Transport for London for *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07, of the investment required in London Underground to maintain services at their current level; [149580]

(3) what assessment he made, in determining his Department's funding for Transport for London in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07, of the effect upon inward investment of (i) increasing, (ii) maintaining the existing level and (iii) decreasing the level of funding for the transport infrastructure in London. [149595]

Mr. McNulty: Government funding for Transport for London in 2004–05 and 2005–06 is expected to be £2,224 million and £2,142 million respectively. These allocations are based on an assessment of London's transport priorities, taking into account affordability following the 2002 spending review. They also take account of the investment needed to deliver a 12 per cent. capacity increase for London Underground by 2012 under the PPP. This is an increase of over 85 per cent. in funding levels from the equivalent provision in 2001–02, and a significant increase in the overall amount available for investment in transport infrastructure, including an unprecedented funding commitment for London Underground, averaging more than £1 billion a year to at least 2010–11. The overall provision for 2006–07 is subject to the current spending review, which is due to be completed this summer.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mr. Curry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the yield from vehicle excise duty was for each local authority area in England, based on the address of the licence holder, for the most recent year for which figures are available. [149378]

Dr. Howells: The net total raised from vehicle excise duty in the financial year 2002–03 was £4,825,741.000. Data based on local authority areas in England are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Aircraft (Carbon Dioxide Emissions)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect on carbon dioxide emissions from aircraft by *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020, *(c)* 2030 and *(d)* 2050 arising from the proposals in the Aviation White Paper. [148587]

Mr. McNulty: The Department will publish a paper, "Aviation and Global Warming", in due course, which will include an analysis of the impact on emissions from the proposals in the Aviation White Paper.

Banned Airlines

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether airlines operating in UK airspace are banned from *(a)* Swiss, *(b)* Belgian and *(c)* Dutch airspace. [149971]

Mr. McNulty: *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer to the hon. Member for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (John Thurso), on 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 546W which describes the database we have on actions taken by other European states. I understand that some restrictions have been placed on the use of specific aircraft, but am not aware that any airlines have been prevented from operating in Swiss, Belgian or Dutch airspace.

Biofuels Directive

Mrs. Shephard: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's timetable is for consultation on the implementation of the EU bio-fuels directive; and what consideration has been given to ensuring that the UK's 2005 target for implementation of the directive is notified in the EU by July. [150782]

Mr. Jamieson: The European Union's Biofuels Directive requires member states to set their own indicative targets for sales of biofuels for road transport to be met in 2005 and 2010. The Directive must be transposed by 31 December 2004. The Government will be consulting shortly on the level of possible targets for the UK and on the steps it might take to meet them. This will allow us to report our intentions to the European Commission by July 2004.

Bristol/Bath to South Coast Transport Study

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Bristol and Bath to South Coast study will be published. [149881]

Mr McNulty: The study, which was commissioned to address the concerns of Bath and North East Somerset council and the South West Regional Assembly over the proposed detrunking of the A36/A46, has been further delayed because it has taken longer than anticipated for the consultants to complete the modelling and firm up their conclusions. However, I am pleased to be able to report that the revised final reports were cleared by the Steering Group when they met on 21 January 2004. It is anticipated that the reports will be printed at the end of January or in early February and copies will then be sent to the South West Regional Assembly for comment.

Following receipt of the study comments from the Regional Assembly, I will be in a position to make a response.

British Airways

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what precautions his Department has advised British Airways to take concerning threats posed to its aircraft over the Middle East and Arabian sub-continents; and if he will make a statement. [148432]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The security of UK aviation, including that of UK airline operations overseas, is kept under active review, and security measures are adjusted as and when necessary. The Government do not disclose their advice to airlines.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information his Department has received concerning a threat to British Airways flights from light aircraft in flight over Saudi Arabian airspace; and what representations he has made to his Saudi Arabian counterpart. [148468]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The Government keep the threat to civil aviation in all countries, including Saudi Arabia, under continuous review. We do not comment on intelligence matters, or on exchanges we may have had with foreign governments about them.

Bugaled Breizh

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* French authorities, *(b)* Breton authorities, *(c)* the Ministry of Defence and *(d)* others following the sinking of the Bugaled Breizh off The Lizard on 15 January. [150988]

Mr. Jamieson: The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) of the Department for Transport has been providing proactive support and advice to their counterparts in France—Bureau Enquêtes-Accidents Mer—since the loss of the Bugaled Breizh. During the incident, HM Coastguard at Falmouth was in regular contact with French search and rescue authorities regarding details of the stricken vessel, and maintained regular contact with them throughout the incident. Subsequently, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has provided French authorities with assistance in attempting to identify the movement of shipping within the area of the accident.

No specific discussions have been held with Breton regional authority separately from French national authorities.

The MAIB has been in contact with the UK Ministry of Defence with regard to the fact that the accident took place in a designated sea training exercise area.

Discussions have also taken place between MAIB/MCA and Devon and Cornwall police and HM coroner in Truro.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150288]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport occupies 21,521m^2 in Greater London, all of which is in central London.

Consultants

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total value was of *(a)* technical and financial contracts, *(b)* technical consultants used on a call-off basis and *(c)* financial consultants used on a call-off basis by the section of (i) his Department and (ii) predecessor departments with responsibility for aviation, in each year since 1992. [149706]

Mr. McNulty: The Department was formed on 29 May 2002. In 2002–03 and the first 9 months of 2003–04 consultancy valued at £71.19 million and £4.74 million respectively was commissioned in relation to aviation.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total value was of *(a)* technical and financial contracts, *(b)* technical consultants used on a call-off basis and *(c)* financial consultants used on a call-off basis by the section of *(i)* his Department and (ii) predecessor departments with responsibility for transport strategy and local transport, in each year since 1992. [149707]

Mr. McNulty: The Department was formed on 29 May 2002. In 2002–03 and the first nine months of 2003–04 consultancy valued at £20.71 and £7.43 million respectively was commissioned in relation to transport strategy and local transport.

Crosswind Runway

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact which increased use of the crosswind runway, as outlined in the Aviation White Paper, will have on *(a)* noise and *(b)* pollution levels in (i) North Gyle, (ii) Gogarloch, (iii) Wester Broom and (iv) Broomhall areas. [149362]

Mr. McNulty: Our assessment of noise and air quality impacts relating to increased use of the crosswind runway is summarised in the Scottish Consultation Document and set out in more detail in the supporting RAS 3 Study Technical Reports, which were published concurrently.

These indicate that there would be no local air quality exceedences affecting the four locations specified, that only at Gogarloch would the increased level of noise experienced exceed 57dBA Leq16 (taken to represent the approximate onset of significant community annoyance). These impacts would be eliminated if the crosswind runway closed following the opening of a new close parallel runway.

Edinburgh Airport

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what compensation will be made available to those residents living close to Edinburgh airport who face a loss in their property value in advance of the proposed construction of a second runway as outlined in the Aviation White Paper; [149667]

(2) if he will make a statement on the statutory blight provisions that will be available to residents living *(a)* close to and *(b)* affected by the planned expansion of Edinburgh airport as outlined in the Aviation White Paper. [149668]

Mr. McNulty: The White Paper recommends that people should have access to some form of redress at beyond the current statutory provisions, for example to help them relocate before any development takes place. Arrangements are being made for non-statutory schemes to be brought forward locally by the airports operators.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment was made of the case for protection of the ancient Catstane site north of the existing Edinburgh airport runway in the formulation of the proposals for a second runway as outlined in the Aviation White Paper; and for what reason no mention was made of the site in the White Paper. [147833]

Mr. McNulty: Carlowrie Cat Stane is one of a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the vicinity of Edinburgh Airport that were identified in the optioneering and appraisal studies that underpinned the Scottish Consultation Document. The Cat Stane was taken into account, alongside a range of other factors, in the design and appraisal of the options for a new runway at Edinburgh and the development of White Paper policy. The ancient monument would ultimately lie between a new runway and the existing one and is therefore unlikely to be affected by development. The necessary protection of the Cat Stane will be addressed in the master plan for the airport and any future planning application for the development of a new runway.

IT Contracts

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list information technology contracts in his Department with a value of above £20 million in each of the last 10 years; what the inception date for each system was; when it became fully functional; when it became fully debugged; and what the cost of over-runs has been. [146201]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. The Department has let no contracts that meet the description.

Light Rail Schemes

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what light rail schemes will be built by 2010; what their expected cost is; and what their *(a)* construction start date and *(b)* completion dates are. [149710]

Mr. McNulty: Sunderland Direct opened in 2002 and Nottingham Express Transit is due to open in March 2004. A number of other light rail schemes are being considered and are in various stages of appraisal, assessment and procurement.

Local Authority Transport Projects

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the measures the Department is taking to enable local authorities to bring forward and implement projects given provisional approval within the last three years' annual transport settlements. [149650]

Mr. McNulty: The Department, through the Government Offices hold regular meetings with local authorities providing advice on funding issues, statutory processes, etc. Working closely with local authorities the Government Offices make sure scheme changes are reported promptly so that decisions on how to proceed can be taken at the earliest opportunity.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many local authority projects given provisional approval within the last three years' annual transport settlements are delayed owing to *(a)* skills shortages and *(b)* the planning process. [149651]

Mr. McNulty: No local authority has identified skills shortages to the Department as a primary cause of delays to major local transport schemes since the introduction of the Local Transport Plan process.

The planning process has been identified as a contributory cause of delay to several major scheme proposals, but the effects of factors such as delayed planning permissions and delayed TWA approvals cannot be clearly separated from other factors.

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148031]

Mr. McNulty: The Department was formed in May 2002. The Department spent £122.2 million in 2002–03 and £42.1 million in the period 1 April 2003 to 31 December 2003 on all types of consultancy excluding research. Separate figures for management consultancy are not held centrally.

Rail Freight

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in the rail freight gauge and capacity enhancements *(a)* Felixstowe to Nuneaton (Phase 2), *(b)* Southampton to West Coast Mainline (Gauge), *(c)* north London and Great Eastern Freight Works, *(d)* West Midland Freight Works, *(e)* re-opening Portishead line for freight and new line to port, *(f)* Transpennine/South Humberside freight capacity works and *(g)* for freight services to Royal Portbury Docks, Bristol. [149709]

Mr. McNulty: Progress is as follows:

(a) Physical works between Felixstowe and Ipswich have been completed. A study commissioned by Network Rail for the Ipswich-Peterborough work has been completed.

(b) Detailed structure surveys are being undertaken.

(c) Gauge enhancement through the Ipswich Tunnel is programmed to take place this summer. Options to improve cross-London capacity are being evaluated.

(d) The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) are considering whether work to provide additional capacity for freight can be carried out in conjunction with the routine re-signalling schemes proposed by Network Rail for the Saltley signal box area and at Stourbridge.

(e) The Portishead line has been re-opened and the new line to the port has been opened.

(f) Network Rail are considering the requirements and will report the cost estimates to the SRA in the spring.

(g) Freight services to the docks are now operating.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many freight access grants have been made in the last 12 months; and what the total sum paid was. [150013]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has not awarded any new Track Access Grants (TAGs) in the last 12 months, three existing grants had their contracts extended. Records of the amount paid through TAGs are held by financial years. Since April 2003 £14.2 million has been paid by the SRA in TAGs. Payments for previous years are reported in the SRA's Annual Reports, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he was consulted before the Strategic Rail Authority introduced its moratorium on freight access grants. [150050]

Mr. McNulty: Yes.

Rail Infrastructure Asset Register

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made by Network Rail to establish a comprehensive asset register of the rail infrastructure; what that register includes; and when it will be completed. [149712]

Mr. McNulty: Since April 2001, when the Rail Regulator modified Railtrack's network licence to require the company to establish and maintain an asset register, the company has thoroughly reviewed the state of its asset knowledge, established the key principles of how its asset information strategy needs to improve its business planning processes and developed detailed plans to meet these business needs. Good progress is being made, and Network Rail is continuing to press ahead with the implementation of these plans.

Development of the asset register comprises a number of key elements. It is replacing many old databases with new systems that will provide access to integrated and consistent, company-wide data for the first time. In some cases, existing data systems can be maintained, but they are being overhauled to ensure that data are accurate and fully up to date.

Much of this work is highly detailed and requires a painstaking review of large volumes of data. Inevitably, this is time consuming, but good progress is being made. Some elements of the project are complete, while others, such as the new system for managing maintenance work known as MIMS[1], are well developed and in the course of introduction. It is expected that MIMS will be fully implemented by April 2004.

As the asset register is being completed, new data collection and storage systems are being implemented, requiring significant changes to the culture of data management within Network Rail. Development will continue to take effect for many years, but it is expected that a fundamental milestone will be the completion of a baseline asset inventory which will contain accurate and fully up-to-date information about the key attributes of the network assets by mid-2005.

[1] Mincom Information Management System—initially developed for use in the mining industry.

Rail Network (Repair and Maintenance)

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will publish provisional findings from the comprehensive asset register on the cost of the backlog of repair and maintenance work on the rail network; [149713]

(2) if he will set a target date to remove the backlog of maintenance and renewal work to achieve steady-state condition. [149714]

Mr. McNulty: The purpose of the asset register is to ensure that Network Rail has appropriate knowledge of the condition, capability and capacity of the network assets. As its development continues, the asset register will introduce new techniques and better quality asset information that will enhance Network Rail's understanding of the age, use and behaviour of individual assets in service, so that it can improve:

(a) its planning for the appropriate maintenance and repair interventions;

(b) the accuracy of long-term predictive modelling of maintenance and renewal interventions; and

(c) the management and monitoring of actual performance against planned activities, and the costs of those activities.

Work to develop these long-term planning tools is still in progress but, in their early stages, they provided important input to the Rail Regulator's review of access charges during 2003—particularly in respect of track renewals.

The Regulator's conclusions, published on 12 December 2003, provide for increased levels of funding for infrastructure maintenance and renewals. It is now for Network Rail to respond by increasing its activities in accordance with the scope and priorities of work that it determines in response to the Regulator's review.

Recruitment Advertising

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on recruitment advertisements in the press, broken down by publication, by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* quangos under the Department and *(c)* non-departmental Government bodies under the Department (i) in the last year and (ii) since the Department's creation. [145808]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. The Department uses the most appropriate publication for recruitment advertising, be it national, regional, trade magazine or website, depending on the nature of the vacancy.

The following are details of the costs incurred by DfT (Central) for recruitment advertising.

2002–03:	£241,868.87
2003–04 to date:	£349,117.32.

This does not include the Department's Agencies and NDPBs as they have responsibility for their own recruitment below the Senior Civil Service.

Royal Train

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the royal train. [149928]

Mr. McNulty: Last year, the royal household completed a review on the future of the royal train. The review concluded that the royal train should continue to be used as an integral part of royal travel but that the household and the Department should actively monitor costs to ensure that it is operated and maintained in the most cost effective manner.

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) his Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147979]

Mr. McNulty: The number of permanent passes in the Department for Transport reported in the last 12 months as lost totals 71. A further two were reported as stolen. In the same period 147 Agency passes were lost and two stolen. A large number of the Department's access control systems are electronic and have the facility to invalidate a pass as soon as it is reported to have been lost. In areas where access is given on visual inspection of a pass, any increased threat that results from the loss of such a pass is assessed and appropriate action is taken.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [150405]

Mr. McNulty: The number of permanent passes in the Department for Transport reported in the last 12 months as lost totals 71. A further two were reported as stolen. A large number of the Department's access control systems are electronic and have the facility to invalidate a pass as soon as it is reported to have been lost. In areas where access is given on visual inspection of a pass any increased threat that results from the loss of such a pass is assessed and appropriate action is taken.

Ships (Dangerous Cargoes)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the occasions since 1975 when ships have lost dangerous cargoes overboard in *(a)* United Kingdom waters, *(b)* the English Channel and *(c)* the North Sea; what cargo was lost in each case; and what was subsequently recovered. [148594]

Mr. Jamieson: The Maritime and Coastguard Agency uses data provided by the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) and information is not available in the form requested. However, Coastguard experience suggests that there are around five or six such incidents per year in UK waters. In 2001, for example, the Agency is aware of five incidents in UK waters. There were none in the English Channel and four in the North Sea. In 2002, the Agency is aware of five incidents in UK waters, including one in the English Channel and three in the North Sea.

The majority of the incidents in 2001 and 2002 involved chemical drums/containers washed up on beaches. In cases such as this, he local authority and/or Fire Brigade have arranged for safe disposal.

Station Improvements

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Strategic Rail Authority will set new targets to achieve its earlier target of delivering £370 million improvements to 1,000 stations by 2004. [149711]

Mr. McNulty: The current programme for providing new facilities under the Modern Facilities at Stations Scheme (MFAS) covers 68 stations. Work on these is scheduled for completion by 31 March 2005. Any extension of the scheme will depend on the availability of future funding following the Government's Spending Review later this year.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148624]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport was established following machinery of Government changes in May 2002. The first complete year for which we have data on staff sick absence rates for staff in the centre of the Department for Transport is January to December 2003. During this period, the number of people taking sick leave was as follows:

Days	Number
(a) Four to seven	292
(b) Eight to 21	137
(c) 22 to 42	37
(d) 43 to 72	17
(e) 73 to 140	16
(f) 141 to 196	6

The Department is committed to managing sick absence effectively.

US Security (Passenger Screening)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what liaison his Department has had with the United States Department of Homeland Security over the Computer-Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System, Version 2 (CAPPS-11). [149605]

Mr. McNulty: The Department liaises closely with United States authorities on aviation security measures, and is aware in that context of the development of the CAPPS2 system.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Sports Activities (Children)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the average time spent on all sports by those aged between six and 16 years was in terms of hours per week in each year since 1997. [149866]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is not collected in this format. Taking into account time spent per week on curriculum PE, outside lessons in term time and during the previous summer holidays, the results of Sport England's Young People and Sport National Surveys suggested that, on average, young people spent eight hours 23 minutes a week on sport and physical activity in 1999 and that this had decreased to eight hours 12 minutes a week by 2002. Data are now being collected for the first time—for publication in April—on the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum.

Cinema

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's policy is on the recognition of cinema as a cultural and regenerative opportunity in unitary development plans. [149956]

Estelle Morris: The UK Film Council's network of Regional Screen Agencies (RSAs) work with key local authorities to position film within cultural plans, and to emphasise the value of cinema as a cultural and regenerative opportunity in unitary development plans.

A number of RSAs are also developing, with local authorities, proposals around cinema exhibition in rural and market towns. This research will emphasise the effects which a working cinema can have on a range of social, cultural and economic issues. The UK Film Council, in partnership with the British Film Institute (BFI) and the RSAs, is currently carrying out research into the social and economic impact of town centre cinemas which is expected to back up the work of RSAs with local authorities.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150255]

Mr. Caborn: The following table shows the numbers of individual civil servants employed by DCMS and the Royal Parks Agency.

	1 April 1997[1]	*1 January 2004*
DCMS		
SCS	22	25
A	61	85
B	101	146
C	64	115
D	104	104
Total	352	475
The Royal Parks		
A	5	8
B	15	23
C	25	30
D	19	23
SCS	1	2
Commander	1	0
Superintendent	1	1
Chief Inspector	0	1
Inspector	7	6

	1 April 1997[1]	1 January 2004
Police Sergeant	13	18
Police Constable	139	116
Horse Manager	1	0
Total	227	228

[1] Data for January 1997 are not available.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150279]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS occupies five buildings/part buildings in central London. The space in occupation amounts to 10,557.94 square metres net usable area. There are no buildings occupied in the Greater London Area.

Commercial Radio Stations

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what assessment she has made of the use of the Radio Joint Audience Research system of audience measurement to calculate the amount of levy on the qualifying revenues of national commercial radio stations; [149892]

(2) if she will adopt a system of electronic audience measurement to calculate the amount of levy on the qualifying revenue of national commercial radio stations; [149893]

(3) what assessment she has made of the effect on revenue from the levy on qualifying revenues of national commercial radio stations of moving from the Radio Joint Audience Research system of audience measurement to a system of electronic audience measurement. [149895]

Estelle Morris: None. The calculation of qualifying revenue is a matter for Ofcom acting in accordance with the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1990. Ofcom (formerly the Radio Authority) is required to draw up and from time to time review a statement setting out the principles to be followed in calculating qualifying revenue. Before doing so, Ofcom must consult the Secretary of State and the Treasury. This statement was last reviewed in November 1995. I understand there are currently no plans for further revisions.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will ask Ofcom to conduct a study into the accuracy of the Radio Joint Audience Research system of audience measurement. [149894]

Estelle Morris: No. The accuracy of audience is a matter for the industry. I understand that RAJAR are conducting extensive research into the merits of electronic measurement devices.

Film Distribution

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what steps her Department is taking to help independent film distributors to compete with *(a)* mainstream products and *(b)* products distributed from Hollywood studios; [149952]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to broaden the audience base at cinemas; [149953]

(3) what steps her Department is taking to support the independent distribution sector in making available more prints of independent films; [149954]

(4) what steps her Department is taking to create incentives for exhibitors to show more independent films. [149955]

Estelle Morris: The UK Film Council, the Government's strategic agency for film, has recently announced a comprehensive Distribution and Exhibition Strategy costing £24 million over the next three years aimed at widening audiences for film and ensuring a broader and more diverse range of films is available.

£14 million of this funding will be allocated, in partnership with the Arts Council of England, to a Digital Screen Network which will enable the exhibition of a wider range of films, through the provision of equipment enabling the digital exhibition of films.

The strategy also includes a Specialised Print and Advertising (P&A) Fund, with £1 million per annum over the next three years, to assist distributors to widen the availability of films defined as "specialised". These are films characterised by an innovative cinematic style, or which engage with challenging subject matter, offering audiences a different experience of cinema from that provided by mainstream US studio-originated material. Support will be available under this fund to enable a distributor to increase the print run and media investment (P&A) for specialised films.

The £1 million UK Film Distribution Programme is another strand of the strategy which is aimed at assisting distributors to increase the theatrical release of indigenous UK films that are aimed at a wide, commercial market.

Heritage Lottery Funding

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Heritage Lottery funding has been awarded to Brent in each year since 1997. [150039]

Estelle Morris: Heritage Lottery Fund commitments made for the Brent Local Authority Area by financial year are as follows:

Financial year	£
1997–98	9,900
1998–99	Nil
1999–2000	Nil
2000–2001	184,600
2001–2002	912,000
2002–2003	1,099,400

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Heritage Lottery

funding has been awarded on average to London boroughs in each year since 1997. [150042]

Estelle Morris: The figures are in the table.

Financial year	£
1997–98	3,038,537
1998–99	1,616,752
1999–2000	351,044
2000–01	1,302,294
2001–02	1,260,987
2002–03	1,561,673

The figures include funding for National Museums and Galleries.

Imperial War Museum North

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to visit the Imperial War Museum North seminar on Nuclear Weapons Past and Future to be held on 11 February. [149969]

Estelle Morris: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has not received an invitation to this seminar.

National Lottery

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total value is of Lottery revenue used to support Government-sponsored projects within her Department since 1997. [149625]

Estelle Morris: One of the central strengths of the Lottery is its ability to harness other sources of funding, from the private, public and the not-for-profit sectors. 143,000 Lottery awards have been made since 1997. The cost of identifying which related to Government-sponsored projects would be disproportionate.

Michele Verroken

Mr. Hawkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to re-appoint Michele Verroken to a position dealing with the campaigns against the misuse of drugs in sport in the United Kingdom. [150640]

Mr. Caborn: Michelle Verroken's contract of employment with UK Sport has not at this stage been terminated. It would therefore, be inappropriate to make any further comment at this time.

Ministerial Visits

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what ministerial visits she has planned for the next six months. [145602]

Tessa Jowell: Over the next six months I have to date the following ministerial visits planned:

Venue	*Purpose of meeting*
Liverpool	To attend the LGA Conference
Bradford	To meet Bradford city council
Berlin	To have a bilateral meeting with the German Culture Minister and will attend the Treptow event
Harrow	Visit to Headstone Manor and Ladbroke Racing HQ.
India	To lead a British film delegation to the Frames film and entertainment festival
Nottingham	to attend the National Sports Development seminar
N Ireland	To attend Sports Cabinet
Cyprus	To visit the BOA training camp in advance of the Olympic games
Birmingham	BBC Charter Review Consultation
Leicester	BBC Charter Review Consultation
York	BBC Charter Review Consultation
Barbican	LSO event
Tate Modern	Terry Frost exhibition
ENO	Reopening
Photographers Gallery	Citigroup Photograph Prize
Royal Festival Hall	Concert
Highbury	Football match

Queen (Diamond Jubilee)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what preparations the Government is making to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012; [149927]

(2) if she will make a statement on plans for celebrating Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee. [150393]

Mr. Caborn: It is too early to consider the celebrations that will mark Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. At an appropriate time the Government will begin discussions with the Palace as to the nature of these celebrations and the necessary preparations will be made.

Royal Family

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the extent to which the royal family features in material to promote tourism in Britain. [150187]

Mr. Caborn: Britain's royal heritage plays an important role in VisitBritain's work to promote Britain overseas as a tourism destination. Many of the publications and campaign materials produced by VisitBritain feature occupied Royal Palaces as well as historic buildings and castles with links to the monarchy. To celebrate the Golden Jubilee in 2002, VisitBritain published a map of 'Britain's Royal Heritage' featuring a foreword by HRH the Prince of Wales. In addition members of the royal family have supported the tourism industry through visits to VisitBritain's overseas offices and other promotional events such as Royal Tourism Day in June last year

Sports Expenditure

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how the funds allocated to Step into Sport have been spent; and how many volunteers have been recruited. [149962]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Office jointly allocated £7 million to Step into Sport, enabling roll-out from April 2002 to 200 school sport partnerships. By summer 2004 it is expected that some 50,000 young people will have taken sports leaders awards of which 1) some 20,000 will have

helped run festivals of sport for primary schools and 2) some 4,000 will have been supported to begin volunteering in local sports clubs. In addition Sport England is supporting 16 national governing bodies of sport and all 45 county sports partnerships to develop and implement volunteer support strategies.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 166–67W, on sports expenditure, if she will break down by funding block the £103.5 million spent by her Department on sport in 2003. [150023]

Mr. Caborn: The £103.5 million is analysed as follows.

Outturn figures for 2002–03

£

Sport	*Spend*
Children's Play	498,000
Commonwealth Games Ceremonies	8,301,000
Step into Sport	2,271,000
Other Support and Subsidy	1,094,000
Football Licensing Authority Grant in Aid	955,000
Sport England Grant in Aid	80,324,000
Space for Sports and Arts	10,100,000
Total	103,543,000

Sport England's Grant in Aid includes a £28 million allocation of funding to support Manchester Commonwealth Games.

Sportsmatch Scheme

Mr. Hawkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to provide further support to the Sportsmatch scheme. [150638]

Mr. Caborn: The Sportsmatch scheme is funded by Sport England, which confirms that the present level of funding will be maintained until 2005–06. Sportsmatch will receive £3.675 million in each of the financial years 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06. The level of funding for future years will be reviewed by the Department and Sport England well in advance of the end of the present funding arrangements.

Sub-regional Television Stations

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to discuss with the BBC during the review of its Charter the development of sub-regional television stations. [148164]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* Charter review is an open and transparent process, characterised by extensive public consultation and debate. The process is at an early stage and the review will cover the full range of the BBC's activities.

Tourism

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to visit domestic tourist attractions *(a)* in and *(b)* outside London. [147248]

Tessa Jowell: During the next few months I have to date plans to visit the following domestic tourist attractions:

(a) In London:

Barbican—LSO centenary event

ENO—attend the re-opening

Donmar Warehouse—The Dark

Royal Festival Hall—Britten's Serenade for Horns and strings and Mahler 6

Highbury—Arsenal football match

Tate Modern—Terry Frost exhibition

London—Flora Marathon

Harrow West—Headstone Manor

(b) Outside London she plans to visit:

Cornwall—Eden Project and Royal Cornwall Museum

Cheltenham—Cheltenham Races

Cardiff—Millennium Stadium, FA Cup final

Twickenham—6 Nations rugby match

Silverstone—British Grand Prix

Royal Troon—British Open Golf

York—Heritage sites

UK Rowing

Mr. Hawkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what additional funding the Government will provide for UK rowing, to enable the UK to host the *(a)* 2005 Rowing World Cup and *(b)* 2006 Rowing World Championships. [150778]

Mr. Caborn: UK Sport is working closely with the Amateur Rowing Association on its application for funding for the 2005 Rowing World Cup, with the aim of submitting it to the Major Events Steering Group in April before further consideration by the UK Sports Council.

UK Sport has already made a grant under the Major Events Programme to the Association of £1,150,000 towards staging the 2006 World Championships.

UK Sport

Mr. Hawkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to appoint a new long-term full-time chairman of UK Sport. [150639]

Mr. Caborn: The interim chair of UK Sport, Sue Campbell, was appointed in September 2003 for up to 18 months and we do not expect to appoint a permanent chair until her term of office expires.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Equal Pay

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Minister for Women what the Government's policy is on transparency of remuneration in relation to equal pay; and what plans the Government have to achieve equal pay for men and women performing the same job description where women are paid less than their male counterparts. [150293]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are taking the issue of transparency of pay seriously. We believe that secrecy can perpetuate the gender pay gap. Employers must ensure that pay systems and practices do not lead to pay inequalities between men and women. This is particularly important with discretionary performance pay and bonuses. We have introduced the equal pay questionnaire to help people who think they have an equal pay problem find out from their employers whether this is the case. We believe that carrying out an equal pay review should be good business practice for every employer and have developed a number of initiatives to help them, including funding the Equal Opportunities Commission to develop equal pay toolkits. We are working in partnership with business, trade unions, the EOC and Opportunity Now to ensure that 35 per cent. of large employers have done pay reviews by 2006. We are also improving the way the Equal Pay Act works in practice and will be consulting shortly on proposals to speed up and simplify complex equal value cases.

Sex Discrimination Act

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Minister for Women what plans she has to bring forward amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act to introduce a public duty to promote gender equality. [149562]

Ms Hewitt: The Government are taking forward a significant legislative agenda on equality matters, and they have committed themselves to introduce a duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for women and men generally when parliamentary time allows.

PRIME MINISTER

Prisoners (Egypt)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1321, if he will *(a)* meet the relatives of the three detainees held in a Cairo prison and *(b)* make representations to President Mubarak on the case being adjourned twice. [150905]

The Prime Minister: As I explained to the hon. Member at Prime Minister's Questions, I am fully aware of the circumstances of this case and understand the disappointment of the men's relatives that the case has been adjourned again.

The UK Ambassador in Cairo has raised our concerns about the case with the Egyptian Foreign Minister on 15 January, one of many representations we have made to the Egyptian authorities. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers have also met the men's families on four occasions.

As the Department which leads on consular cases overseas, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers should continue to make representations to the Egyptian Government where appropriate and maintain contact with the men's families.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total expenditure on *(a)* information campaigns and *(b)* advertising was for the Lord Chancellor's Department in each year since 1997. [145384]

Mr. Lammy: The information is listed in the following table.

Over the period in question, the Lord Chancellor's Department spent £4,179,300 on one information campaign in 2000–01, of which £1,347,600 was spent on advertising. The purpose of this campaign was to raise public awareness of the Community Legal Service, set up in April 2000, to provide legal advice and guidance to the public.

Since it became the Department of Constitutional Affairs in June 2003, my Department has also run a campaign to recruit more people from under-represented groups and younger people to the magistracy. The total expenditure to date on this campaign has been £207,000 on regional bus, radio and press advertising.

£

Financial year May-March	*(a) Expenditure on information campaigns*	*(b) Expenditure on advertising*
1997–98		
LCD	0	0
Court Service	0	0
Public Trust Office	0	0
1998–99		
LCD	0	0
Court Service	0	0
Public Trust Office	0	0
1999–2000		
LCD	0	0
Court Service	0	0
Public Trust Office	0	0
2000–01		
LCD	4,179,300	1,347,600
Court Service	0	0
Public Trust Office	0	0

£

Financial year May-March	(a) Expenditure on information campaigns	(b) Expenditure on advertising
2001–02		
LCD	0	0
Court Service	0	0
PGO[1]	0	0
2002-June 2003		
DCA[2]	0	207,000
Court Service	0	0
PGO	0	0

[1] The Public Guardianship Office replaced PTO in April 2003.
[2] The Department for Constitutional Affairs replaced LCD on June 2003.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total expenditure on *(a)* information campaigns and *(b)* advertising was for his Department since its creation. [145385]

Mr. Lammy: Since it was set up on 12 June 2003, my Department has *(a)* spent £207,000 on one information campaign to encourage more people from under-represented groups and younger people to become magistrates.

(b) This information campaign has only comprised advertising, of which the expenditure to date is:

£176,000 for regional bus adverts;

£27,000 for press adverts;

£4,000 for radio advertising.

Legal Finance

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the QCs who received the highest overall payments *(a)* from the Community Legal Service budget and *(b)* from the Criminal Defence Service budget in 2002–03. [141417]

Mr. Lammy: The highest total payments made directly from the Community Legal Service fund during 2002–03 were to Lord Brennan QC. Lord Brennan received £606,000 to the nearest thousand.

The highest value of aggregated payments made from the Criminal Defence Service budget during 2002–03 were to Mr James Sturman QC. Mr Sturman received in the region of £620,000.

Care should be taken not to misinterpret these payments as an indication of annual earnings for work carried out in the year for the following reasons:

Payments made during any financial year will include payments for work carried out before the start of the year, and will include payments for cases which started and concluded over several years.

Payments received during any financial year do not necessarily mean that they were paid for work carried out at the rank of QC. Barristers may be paid directly by an instructing solicitor as part a solicitors disbursement.

The figures quoted above are gross payments and are inclusive of VAT, and may include payments on account where applicable as well as travel and hotel expenses incurred.

Magistrates Courts

Chris Ruane: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the magistrate benches that *(a)* do and *(b)* do not co-operate in joint police, local authority and magistrate courts training. [144836]

Mr. Leslie: There is no central data collected on the information requested. It is a matter for each MCC whether joint training and other events take place in co-operation with local authorities and the police. In making these decisions MCCs will also take regard to the need to protect the judicial independence of the magistracy. Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJB) are the forum through which such co-operation may be discussed and agreed. For example, we know of an LCJB which has been instrumental in developing a protocol on anti-social behaviour order matters which is used by all criminal justice service agencies.

LCJBs are run under a tripartite arrangement involving the Home Office, my Department and the Crown Prosecution Service and seek to include the chief officers from the Police, the Probation Service, Crown Prosecution Service, Crown and Magistrates' Courts, the Prison Service, and Youth Offending Teams. Magistrates' Courts are not represented by magistrates, but the Justices Chief Executive (JCE) does attend as the senior official from the local MCC on their behalf. The JCE has overall responsibility for ensuring that appropriate training is planned and delivered to magistrates and can direct as necessary on issues arising from LCJBs.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will report on the work of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights in relation to Afghanistan. [149652]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Kamal Hossain, the Special Rapporteur, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/19, visited Afghanistan three times in 2002. His last, ninth report, issued on 13 January 2003, focused on the impact on human rights of Afghanistan's transitional process started by the Bonn Agreement of December 2001.

There has been progress on a range of human rights issues since the Special Rapporteur's last report. Most recently, Articles 5, 7 and 58 of the new constitution, agreed on 4 January 2004, oblige the Afghan State to

protect human rights, ensure unity and equality among all ethnic groups, abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and establish an Independent Human Rights Commission to promote the advancement and protection of human rights. Chapter Two of the constitution has 38 Articles covering the Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens. These include Articles 22 and 43 which establish equal rights for all Afghans (both men and women), including access to free education up to degree level; and Article 34 which states that freedom of expression is inviolable.

The Afghan Transitional Administration and international community are committed to providing the security and resources needed to support implementation of the new constitution, and to develop effective mechanisms to tackle continuing human rights violations and abuses, including those against women.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the progress by the UN and Afghan Transitional Authority on measures concerning Afghan women and girls set out in Economic and Social Council Resolution 2002–04. [149653]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Since Resolution 2002–04 there have been a number of significant developments affecting women and girls in Afghanistan.

On 5 March 2003, Afghanistan publicly demonstrated its intention to restore full and equal rights for women by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In the same month, the EU sponsored a resolution on Afghanistan at the Commission on the Status of Women, welcoming the progress that Afghanistan has made to improve the situation for women and urging the Afghan Transitional Administration (ATA) to ensure that a legal framework, protecting women's rights, was put in place.

The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, submitted her report on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan in October 2003. Many of the recommendations requiring action by the ATA were reflected in the new Afghan Constitution, agreed on 4 January 2004. 23 per cent. of the delegates to the Constitutional Loya Jirga were women from across Afghanistan. Articles 22, 43 and 44 of the new Constitution establish women's equal rights, including access to education; and place an obligation on the Afghan State to develop education programmes for women. By March 2003, the number of children attending the first day of school rose to 4.2 million: 37 per cent. of the students are girls, and a third of the teachers are women.

In late 2003, the UN appointed Luntan Bayarmaa as the Gender Adviser in the Office of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the political parties registered in Afghanistan. [150643]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), no political parties have yet been registered in Afghanistan.

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action was taken by his Department as a result of the threat that light aircraft posed to British Airways planes in Saudi Arabia. [150528]

Mr. Straw: We are not able to comment on specific threats but I can assure the right hon. Gentlemen that we take very seriously every threat to aviation and take appropriate action, in coordination with the Department for Transport, airlines and, as necessary, the security and intelligence agencies and foreign governments.

British Indian Ocean Territory

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will assess the feasibility of resettling the population to those parts of British Indian Ocean Territory permitted to Chagossians under the Immigration Ordinance (British Indian Ocean Territory) dated 3 November 2002. [150188]

Mr. Rammell: A study by independent experts into the feasibility of resettlement of the Chagos islands was commissioned in April 2000. The report on the first phase of the study was completed in June 2000 and the report on the second phase, which incorporated findings from the first, was completed in June 2002. Copies of these reports are in the Library of the House.

The study concluded that short-term habitation for limited numbers would be possible but only on a subsistence basis while any long-term settlement would be precarious and costly. No final decisions have been taken on any further phase of this feasibility study.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a list of actions taken since July 2002 to support the Chagossians. [150189]

Mr. Rammell: No specific measures in support of the Chagossian community have been taken since July 2002. But we continue to be in contact with the leaders and representatives of the community about the concerns that they have.

China

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations between China and the UK. [150040]

Mr. Rammell: We currently enjoy good relations with China. These have been built on regular high level visits in both directions, as well as lower level exchanges on many different issues.

As part of our efforts to increase collaboration between the UK and China, a Task Force was set up in September 2003 under my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's leadership in order to make firm recommendations for action. Work is progressing and we hope to announce these in late spring.

We have welcomed China's support in the fight against terrorism and have encouraged her to engage constructively in international fora.

We do, nevertheless, continue to raise with the Chinese authorities areas where we disagree, such as Human Rights.

Cyprus

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his European Union counterparts on the future of Cyprus and if he will make a statement. [150033]

Mr. MacShane: I frequently discuss the future of Cyprus with my European colleagues. We all agree on the desirability of an early settlement of the Cyprus problem so that a united island can join the EU on 1 May. This remains the Government's objective.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of prospects for an agreement between Greece and Turkey on the issue of the future sovereignty of Cyprus when the island accedes to the European Union on 1 May and if he will make a statement. [150034]

Mr. MacShane: The Government continue to believe that a settlement to the Cyprus problem is achievable by 1 May. But this will only be possible if all sides meet the requirements set down by the UNSG in April last year, and make a full and clear commitment to reach a settlement on the basis of the UNSG's proposals. Current indications give some cause for optimism. I was impressed during my recent visit to Turkey by the Turkish Government's determination to work for an early settlement.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the role of the latest UN plan for the sovereignty of Cyprus in achieving an agreement between Greece and Turkey and if he will make a statement. [150035]

Mr. MacShane: The Government believe that the UNSG's proposals are the only basis for a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem. The proposals are the product of involvement by the UN over many years. I can see no other solution that can adequately satisfy the legitimate concerns of all sides (including Greece and Turkey) on the island's future.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the *(a)* Turkish ambassador and *(b)* Greek ambassador to discuss the future of Cyprus. [150036]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met the Greek Foreign Minister on 22 January 2004. The Greek ambassador was present. The Foreign Secretary has not had a substantive meeting with the Turkish ambassador so far this year. But we are in very close contact with the Turkish embassy, and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara. I met the Turkish ambassador on 21 January. The future of Cyprus was one of the main topics of discussion in all of these meetings.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what priorities he has set for assisting in negotiations aimed at achieving an agreement between Greece and Turkey on the sovereignty of Cyprus. [150037]

Mr. MacShane: Our first priority regarding Cyprus is to work for a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement. We believe the best, and only realistic, way of achieving this is through the continued efforts of the United Nations. We are actively encouraging all sides to meet the UN Secretary General's requirements for an early resumption of negotiations based on the UNSG's proposals, so that a united Cyprus can join the EU on 1 May 2004.

Departmental Properties

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list residential properties sold by his Department since June 1997, and the net cash proceeds of each. [149856]

Mr. Rammell: Since June 1997 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has sold the following residential accommodation:

Head of post residences	*Staff accommodation*	*Properties*
1997–98		
Paris OECD	—	1
Zurich	—	1
	Bogota	1 Flat
	Buenos Aires	1 Flat
	Canberra	1 House
	Capetown	1 House
	Geneva	1 House
	Georgetown	1 House
	Harare	1 House
	Helsinki	2 Houses, 1 Flat
	Johannesburg	1 House
	Lusaka	4 House
	Madrid	1 Flat
	Maputo	1 House
	Maseru	2 Houses
	Paris	7 Flats
	Pretoria	1 House
	Reykjavik	1 House
	The Hague	2 Flats
	Tirana	1 House
	Wellington	1 House
	Windhoek	1 House
1998–99		
Lille	—	1
Marseilles	—	1
	Copenhagen	2 Flats
	Dublin	1 House
	Geneva	4 Flats
	Honiara	1 House
	Johannesburg	2 Houses
	Mbabane	1 House
	Oslo	1 House
	Ottawa	2 Houses
	Paris	2 Flats
	Ports of Spain	1 House
	Pretoria	Blocks of Flats
	The Hague	1 Flat
1999–2000		
Cleveland	—	1
	Bogota	1 Flat
	Bonn	1 House

Head of post residences	*Staff accommodation*	*Properties*
	Bridgetown	1 House
	Budapest	1 House
	Gevena	2 Flats
	Johannesburg	1 Flat
	Kuala Lumpur	1 Flat
	Madrid	1 House
	Mbabane	1 House
	Paris	2 Flats
	Port Moresby	2 Houses
	Santiago	1 House
	Stockholm	2 Flats
	Sydney	1 House
	Tel Aviv	1 House
2000 to 2001		
Bonn	—	1
	Bonn	1 House
	Cairo	2 Houses
	Capetown	1 House
	Dar es Salaam	Block of 6 Flats
	Dublin	2 Houses
	Geneva	1 Flat
	Helsinki	1 House
	Jakarta	1 House
	Kuala Lumpur	1 Flat, 1 House
	Lagos	Block of 6 Flats
	Lisbon	1 House
	Madrid	1 House
	Nairobi	1 House
	Nassau	1 House
	Ottawa	3 Flats
	Singapore	1 House
2001–2002		
Munich	—	1
Paris	—	1
St. John's	—	1
	Athens	3 Flats
	Bogota	5 Flats
	Brussels	1 House, 1 Flat
	Buenos Aires	2 Houses
	Cairo	1 House
	Capetown	3 Houses
	Chicago	1 House
	Dar es Salaam	1 House
	Dublin	1 House
	Geneva	1 Flat
	Helsinki	1 House, 2 Flats
	Jakarta	1 House
	Kingston	1 House
	Kuala Lumpur	2 Houses
	Lagos	2 Houses
	Lusaka	1 House
	Montevideo	1 Flat
	New York	2 Flats
	Oslo	1 House
	Ottawa	1 House
	Paris	6 Flats
	Port of Spain	1 House, 1 Flat
	Santiago	1 Flat
	Stanley	1 House
	Stockholm	1 House
	Sydney	1 House
	Tel Aviv	4 Houses
	The Hague	3 Flats
	Valetta	1 House
	Vienna	1 House
	Washington	1 House, 6 Flats
2002–2003		
Lyon	—	1
	Amman	1 House
	Bridgetown	4 Houses
	Canberra	2 Houses
	Dakar	1 House
	Dublin	2 Houses
	Durban	1 House
	Lagos	1 House
	Lilongwe	6 Houses
	Lusaka	1 House
	Madrid	1 Flat, 1 House
	Muscat	2 Houses
	Ottawa	1 Flat
	Paris	2 Flats
	Pretoria	1 House
	Reykjavik	1 House
	Santiago	1 House
	Strasbourge	1 House
	Washington	1 House, 2 Flats
2003–2004		
Gothenburg	—	1
Guatemala	—	1
Ho Chi Minh City	—	1
San Francisco	—	1
	Auckland	1 House
	Budapest	1 Flat
	Buenos Aires	1 Flat
	Capetown	1 House
	Dublin	1 House
	Gaberone	2 Houses
	Ho Chi Minh City	3 Properties
	Madrid	1 House
	Nairobi	3 Houses
	Port of Spain	1 House
	Washington	6 Houses, 1 Flat

Note:
The total receipts for the period covered is £88.5 million.

For reasons of commercial confidentiality the FCO cannot give under exemption 13 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information individual sales figures.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the residential properties purchased by his Department since June 1997, and the total cash cost of each. [149857]

Mr. Rammell: Since June 1997 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has purchased the following residential properties:

Descriptions	
	Properties
1 April 1997 to 31 March 1998	Antananarivo: Residence
	Bridgetown: Staff house
	Kyiv: Staff Flat
	The Hague: Staff Flat
	Vienna: UK Residence
1 April 1998 to 31 March 1999	Montevideo: Staff Flat
	Seoul: Staff house
1 April 1999 to 31 March 2000	Budapest: Staff house
	Georgetown: Residence
	Gothenberg: Residence
	Ottawa: Staff accommodation
1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001	Antigua: Residence
	Bucharest: Residence
	Caracas: Staff Accommodation
	Dublin: Residence
	Dublin: Staff house
	Ottawa: Staff house
	Port of Spain: Staff house
	Santiago: Staff House

	Descriptions
	Properties
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	Vilnius: Residence Yerevan: Residence Berne: Staff House Guatemala: Residence Kyiv: Residence Stockholm: Staff House
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	New York: Residence Durban: Staff House Plymouth: Residence
1 April 2003 to date	San Francisco: Residence
Total expenditure	£28.5 million

The FCO is withholding information in individual purchase figures under exemption 12 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Entry Clearance

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many interviews were conducted by the British High Commission in Islamabad, Pakistan for entry clearance for settlement purposes in each month in the last two years. [149885]

(2) how long it took on average in 2003 for a person applying for entry clearance for settlement to be granted an interview; [149887]

Mr. Mullin: The table shows the number of interviews for entry clearance applications for settlement, conducted at our High Commission in Islamabad in each month during 2002 and 2003.

	Settlement interviews conducted in 2002	*Settlement interviews conducted in 2003*
January	1,607	Nil
February	758	Nil
March	1,065	Nil
April	1,296	Nil
May	697	Nil
June	Nil	Nil
July	Nil	Nil
August	Nil	Nil
September	Nil	Nil
October	Nil	196
November	Nil	123
December	Nil	164

Due to security concerns at the High Commission, three partial evacuations of staff were carried out between October 2001 and May 2002 and only essential staff remained in post by 8 June 2002. Although the number of entry clearance staff in post increased significantly during 2003, the Visa Section's ability to offer applicants an interview has been severely disrupted over the past two years.

During 2002 entry clearance interviews for applicants wishing to settle in the UK were only conducted from January to 21 May. During 2003 interviews for non-settlement applications resumed on 1 June, although interviews for settlement did notresume until 1 October 2003, since when the average wait for interview has been 10 working days. During 2004, 63 interviews are recorded as being conducted up to 20 January.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people are waiting to be granted an interview by the British high commission in Islamabad for entry clearance for settlement purposes. [149888]

Mr. Mullin: As at 20 January 2004, 62 people had scheduled appointments for settlement interviews up to 10 February. A further 66 applicants were waiting for their interview appointments to be arranged.

EU Countries (Access)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the estimated *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage is of the populations of (i) Bosnia and Herzegovina and (ii) Kosovo who have visa-free access to European Union countries by virtue of their Croatian passports or citizenship is; and if he will make a statement. [147734]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 14 January 2004]:* While we are aware that a number of Croatian citizens living in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo have visa-free access to European Union countries by virtue of their Croatian passports or citizenship, we do not have details of precise numbers. In order to travel to the UK, all Croatian citizens must have a visa.

Further research to determine the precise figures required by this question would incur disproportionate costs.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the membership of the panel responsible for drawing up the shortlist of United Kingdom candidates for the European Court of Human Rights, indicating *(a)* whom they represent and *(b)* who appoints them. [147791]

Mr. Mullin: The panel comprises:

Sir Hayden Phillips (chair), Permanent Secretary to the Department for Constitutional Affairs;

Lord Justice Laws, Judge of the Court of Appeal;

Lord Cullen of Whitekirk, Lord President of the Court of Session;

Sir Michael Wood, Legal Adviser to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office;

Ms Joanne Foster CBE, former Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission (lay member).

The composition of the panel was approved by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs.

Libya

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of continuing activity in Libya between March and September 2003 aimed at developing a nuclear capability; and what assessment was made on where material and development assistance was coming from. [150529]

Mr. Straw: Under exemption 1 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information I am not prepared to comment on particular operations and discussions.

Nuclear-related Technology

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government take to monitor sales of nuclear-related technology by *(a)* Canada and *(b)* France. [148964]

Mr. MacShane: We take a keen interest in supplies to countries of proliferation concern, whatever the source. But the UK Government do not directly monitor sales of nuclear-related technology by Canada and France. Both countries are members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) export control regime which controls the supply of nuclear-related items and technology.

NSG members undertake not to transfer sensitive items where there is a risk of diversion to acts of nuclear terrorism, to nuclear explosive activity, or unsafeguarded nuclear fuel cycle activity. They exchange notifications issued as a result of national decisions to deny transfers of sensitive items, and undertake not to approve identical exports without first consulting the state that issued the original denial notification. Further information can be found at: www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org

Both states are also members of the Zangger Committee, which serves as the "faithful interpreter" of the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to harmonise nuclear export controls for NPT parties. Committee members produce annual declarations that they have not transferred certain specified material to non-nuclear weapon states not party to the NPT. More information can be found at: www.zanggercommittee.org.

Olympic Games

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will ensure that *(a)* the British Council and *(b)* the BBC World Service are included in the diplomatic initiatives to win the 2012 Olympics for London. [150789]

Mr. Mullin: The International Olympic Committee rules of conduct forbid international promotion of the bid until 15 November.

Officials will be working with the British Council over the coming months to consider ways in which we can work together to support the bid once promotion is allowed.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has no editorial control over the BBC World Service.

Publicity Campaigns

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by his Department has spent on (i) advertising and publicity and (ii) information campaigns in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04 (estimated); and if he will make a statement. [149922]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* Budgets for Wilton Park, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's only agency, and our 10 non-departmental public bodies are not held centrally. To compile this information would incur disproportionate cost.

Sri Lanka

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effects of political tension between the Sri Lankan Prime Minister and President on the peace process and existing ceasefire. [151074]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We support the Sri Lankan peace process both politically and practically and welcome the progress made since February 2002 when the ceasefire came into effect. We are concerned that the political dispute between President Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe could have a detrimental effect on the process at a crucial stage. We continue to impress upon the two leaders the importance of resolving the underlying issues in a transparent way and of finding a rapid and positive way forward so that peace talks can resume as soon as possible. We are working closely with international partners to reinforce these messages. We are encouraged that the ceasefire continues to hold and we welcome the continued commitments of the President, Prime Minister and of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to the ceasefire and the peace process.

St. Helena

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the modernising of the St. Helena constitution. [150095]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* Councillors from St. Helena will be visiting London next week for a further round of talks with FCO officials on the proposed new Constitution. The intention is to have a new Constitution in place in time for the next dissolution of the Legislative Council in July 2005.

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the principal reasons were for Her Majesty's Government's refusal to accept the St. Helena proposals for a new constitution. [150096]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* Discussions are still in progress on a revised constitution for St. Helena. Two councillors from St. Helena,

accompanied by their constitutional adviser, are due in London this week to participate in a further round of talks with Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials.

Taiwan

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the accession of Taiwan to the World Health Organisation with full member status. [150636]

Mr. Rammell: There are difficulties over Taiwanese involvement in a UN forum where statehood is a prerequisite for full membership. We would consider with our EU partners any proposal for Taiwanese involvement in WHO which took account of these difficulties.

DEFENCE

Territorial Army

6. **Mr. Liddell-Grainger:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role is envisaged for the Territorial Army in the light of the war in Iraq. [150158]

Mr. Ingram: The Strategic Defence Review emphasised the need for the Territorial Army to be integrated, relevant and usable. It is an essential part of the current and future structure of the Army. Operations in Iraq have underlined the importance of their role, providing key capabilities and skills which complement those of their regular counterparts.

Afghanistan/Iraq (Withdrawal of Troops)

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the timetable for withdrawing British troops from *(a)* Afghanistan and *(b)* Iraq. [150160]

Mr. Hoon: We have no plans to withdraw British forces from Afghanistan, where they are helping to support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement. With regard to Iraq, the joint United States—United Kingdom declaration of 20 November 2003 on Iraq says:

"Our military participation in the multinational force in Iraq will serve the Iraqi people until the Iraqis themselves are able to discharge full responsibility for their own security."

Our engagement in both Afghanistan and Iraq is driven by clear policy aims, not by arbitrary timetables for withdrawal.

Eurofighter Typhoon

20. **Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the unit cost is of each Eurofighter aircraft; when it is expected that it will be brought into service; and if he will make a statement. [150173]

Mr. Ingram: The Unit Production Cost of a Typhoon aircraft as published in Major Project Report 2003 is £56.8 million. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced in his written statement on 30 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 1WS, Eurofighter Typhoon achieved Type Acceptance on that day triggering the process of bringing the aircraft into service with the RAF. Two aircraft have been accepted off contract and RAF pilot training and operational evaluation activities have begun. Operational Employment is due to be achieved in the second half of the decade.

Procurement (British Manufacturing)

22. **James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on defence procurement policy and British manufacturing. [150175]

Mr. Ingram: It is the Government's policy to provide the armed forces with the capabilities which they require at the best value for money for the taxpayer. As the Defence Industrial Policy that my right hon. Friend launched with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in October 2002 makes clear, we take fully into account the benefit to the United Kingdom economy from defence expenditure, and we seek to encourage a healthy and globally competitive UK defence industry.

Iraq

23. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the death of an Iraqi civilian during a demonstration policed by British troops at Al-Amarah. [150176]

Mr. Ingram: Members of the 1st Battalion of the Light Infantry deployed to a riot in Al Amarah on 10 January to assist the Iraqi Police. Two Iraqis were shot by UK forces, one of whom died. Both were preparing to throw grenades, having already thrown other grenades or explosive devices at UK vehicles, and were a threat to our forces and to local Iraqi civilians.

Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists deployed on Operation Telic have resigned following the operation. [149349]

Mr. Caplin: As at 16 January 2004, 8,694 reservists had been mobilised to support Operation Telic. Of these, 118 had left the reserve forces. Not all departures can be linked directly to Operation Telic. The reasons for leaving include having reached end of engagement, medical discharges, retirement and enlistment into another Service.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many individuals being held by UK forces in Iraq have died in custody; and if he will make a statement. [148578]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 1123W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton and Wanstead (Mr. Cohen).

Alcohol Consumption

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was in the last year for which figures are available of alcoholic beverages bought and consumed on military barracks in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* overseas. [149727]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Apache

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in the last year in respect of the training of aircrew for the WAH-64 Apache. [148956]

Mr. Ingram: WAH-64 Apache aircrew training has been proceeding to plan since January 2002 and we are on target to complete the first Conversion to Type course in March this year.

Atlantic Crusader

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Answer of 14 January 2004,

Official Report, column 763W, on the Atlantic Crusader, under what flag the ship is sailing; for what purpose his Department has commissioned the vessel; and for how long the charter is. [149964]

Mr. Ingram: The Atlantic Crusader is sailing under the Cypriot flag and as I said in the answer I gave the hon. Member on 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 763W, is currently returning from a re-supply voyage to the Falkland Islands. She will then make a second return voyage to the Falklands and is due to complete her charter on 7 April 2004.

Depleted Uranium

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Challenger 2 smoothbore tank gun demonstrator project will consider measures to end the use of depleted uranium ammunition. [149647]

Mr. Ingram: The 120mm smoothbore gun Technology Demonstrator Programme (TDP) aims to provide information on the application of a 120mm smoothbore gun technology to existing and future direct fire platforms, including Challenger 2.

Part of the TDP involves the investigation of non-Depleted Uranium (DU) 120mm smoothbore ammunition. This option may then be compared with the United Kingdom's existing ammunition in order to determine the optimum means of maintaining the UK's direct fire main armament capability.

Deployment

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel are assigned to *(a)* theatres of conflict and *(b)* peacekeeping duties, broken down by country or region involved. [150024]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 22 January 2004]*: There are approximately 12,000 British Service personnel deployed outside the United Kingdom to theatres of conflict and peace-keeping duties:

	Number
Iraq/The Gulf	9,800
The Balkans (Kosovo and Bosnia)	1,400
UN Peace-keeping operations:	
Cyprus	400
Afghanistan	340
Africa	40
Georgia	10

The figures exclude Service personnel onboard ships and MOD civilian personnel deployed to these locations in support of these operations.

Far East Prisoners

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in relation to the compensation scheme for civilian prisoners of the Japanese, how many claims *(a)* have been received, *(b)* have been paid, *(c)* have been refused and *(d)* are outstanding; in relation to *(b)*, how many were (i) not resident in the UK and (ii) not UK citizens but citizens of other Commonwealth countries at the time (A) of payment and (B) of retention; and in relation to *(c)*, how many claimed before 25 June 2001; how many were resident in the UK; and how many of each category were rejected on the grounds they could not show a parent or grandparent born in the UK. [149575]

Mr. Caplin: As of 16 January 2004, 2,922 claims for ex gratia payments have been received from former civilian internees, of which 1,882 have been successful; 1,032 have been unsuccessful, of which 851 were received before 25 June 2001; and eight remain to be dealt with. These figures do not include claims from the surviving spouses of former civilian internees, as these figures are not kept separately from the total of claims from the surviving spouses of all the groups covered by the scheme.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Kircaldy (Dr. Moonie) advised in his answer of 28 April 2003, *Official Report*, column 52W, at that time approximately 800 claims from former civilian internees, including surviving spouses with addresses abroad, were rejected on the blood link criterion, while approximately 300 claims from civilians, including spouses, with United Kingdom addresses were rejected on the blood link criterion. We do not have the other figures sought because the details necessary to produce them were either not required or sought from claimants, or not collated as part of the process of verification of claims.

Foreign Ship Chartering

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department takes to ensure that foreign ships it charters meet international convention standards for safety and working conditions. [149907]

Mr. Ingram: Vessels being considered for chartering are assessed for technical compliance against a number of key criteria which will include: Marine Superintendent's suitability reports, nature and volume of cargo.

A risk assessment is undertaken, which will include: Port State Inspection records, flag, classification society and age.

When considered necessary, a ship's survey will be undertaken by a recognised marine surveyor prior to any decision to charter.

Human Rights

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what special training has been provided for the Special Investigation Branch of the Royal Military Police on the implications of the coming into force of the Human Rights Act. [149661]

Mr. Ingram: Special training on changes to Special Investigation Branch (SIB) policies and procedures consequent upon the introduction of the Human Rights Act 1998 has been provided to all SIB units.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he has taken to guarantee the *(a)* effectiveness and *(b)* independence of investigation of suspicious deaths among Service personnel occurring overseas as required by Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights. [149662]

Mr. Ingram: The rules governing investigation of suspicious deaths of Service personnel outside the United Kingdom are detailed in the Queens Regulations for each Service. The Investigations Branch of the relevant Service Police conducts investigations, where appropriate, in conjunction with the local civilian police force. All cases of sudden death are investigated to Home Office standards using accepted best practice.

Where the body is returned to the United Kingdom, it automatically becomes subject to an inquest by HM Coroner or (in Scotland) the Procurator Fiscal.

Full account is taken of our obligations under ECHR.

Project Soothsayer

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of Project Soothsayer. [149543]

Mr. Ingram: Project Soothsayer is an important part of our investment in Network Enabled Capability (NEC), and was highlighted as such in the New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review.

Soothsayer will provide Tactical Electronic Warfare equipment for the United Kingdom land forces, and is now in the demonstration and manufacture phase. The programme is proceeding to plan and is currently on track to meet its initial in-service date of 2006. It is also expected to meet its cost and performance targets.

Rape/Violence Against Women

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in investigating allegations of rape by UK military personnel in Kenya during the last 20 years. [149663]

Mr. Ingram: As part of their on-going investigations, the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch (SIB) deployed a team of 20 to Kenya in October 2003 to conduct witness interviews. The SIB completed in excess of 100 witness interviews prior to Christmas. This process, which involves taking video-taped statements of witnesses and gathering supporting evidence, is likely to continue throughout this year.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what training is given to UK military personnel stationed abroad on gender sensitivity and issues around violence against women with particular reference to *(a)* rape, *(b)* trafficking and *(c)* forced prostitution. [149665]

Mr. Ingram: No specific awareness training is given to United Kingdom military personnel about violence against women, rape, trafficking and forced prostitution. All members of the armed forces are bound by codes of conduct that set out the standard of behaviour expected of them. They also receive regular diversity training, which includes gender awareness. Personnel posted abroad receive instruction on the customs and culture of the host country including, where relevant, the cultural status of women.

Reserve Forces

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to revise the Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985, with particular reference to *(a)* simplifying the procedure, *(b)* taking into account loss of (i) pension and (ii) benefits and *(c)* the legal expenses required in progressing a defended case to a final hearing. [146181]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the latter part of my reply of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1124–25W.

Once this examination is complete we shall discuss with the Department of Trade and Industry (which is responsible for administering the Reinstatement Committees under the 1985 Act) what, if any, revisions might be necessary.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what circumstances his Department provides legal assistance to reservists to seek redress when they have lost their employment allegedly as a consequence of mobilisation; and if he will make a statement. [148932]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence does not provide legal advice or representation to reservists seeking reinstatement to their civilian employment under the terms of the Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985. It does, however, provide advice to reservists on their legal right to reclaim their civilian employment and how to seek reinstatement. Each reservist receives a copy of JSP 532, "Guidance for Reservists Returning to Civilian Employment Following a Period of Mobilised Service". The Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers (SaBRE) campaign team provides a help line and a website which gives additional information and advice.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what evaluation has been made of the impact of the SaBRE campaign; and if he will make a statement. [R] [149423]

Mr. Caplin: Since the launch of the SaBRE campaign in October 2002, there have been two substantial pieces of independent research on the impact and effectiveness of the campaign, both commissioned through COI Communications. The reports found that while employers' awareness of the campaign in its first year of existence was low, over 60 per cent. of companies who had been in contact with SaBRE felt that that contact had been positive and worthwhile. The lessons we learn from both these and future studies will form a central part of future SaBRE campaign activity.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists from volunteer reserve units in *(a)* each of the three armed Services and *(b)* each of the 11 areas of the country tasked with aiding the civil authorities in handling major incidents have been mobilised for Operation Telic. [R] [149425]

Mr. Caplin: The number of Civil Contingencies Reaction Force (CCRF) members who are serving on Operation Telic by CCRF region is detailed in the table. In the time available, we have only been able to identify those individuals currently mobilised to support Operation Telic. All are members of the Territorial Army.

	Number
2 South East Brigade (Bde)	26
49 East of England Bde	126
145 Home Counties Bde	39
43 Wessex Bde	2
143 West Midlands Bde	33
160 Wales Bde	25
15 North East Bde (N)	99
15 North East Bde (S)	147
42 North West Bde (N)	21
42 North West Bde (S)	18
51 Scottish Bde (Highland)	45
51 Scottish Bde (Lowland)	34
London Regiment	150
Northern Ireland	[1]0

[1] Only to the extent that once a member is deployed, he is replaced.

Royal Navy

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* frigates and *(b)* destroyers are in service with the Royal Navy. [150165]

Mr. Hoon: There are 20 frigates and 11 destroyers currently in service in the Royal Navy.

CABINET OFFICE

Central Office of Information

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what progress has been made in making the Central Office of Information more responsive to Parliament. [147838]

Mr. Alexander: External performance targets are published each year by means of a written statement. Annual performance against external targets is reported and published in the Central Office of Information (COI) Annual Report and Accounts. This is laid before the House each year before the summer recess following the end of the financial year to which the report relates, and copies placed in the Libraries of the Houses.

Civil Contingencies Bill

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the *(a)* dates and *(b)* venues of the public consultation in Wales on the draft Civil Contingencies Bill. [150021]

Mr. Alexander: The Public Consultation exercise for England and Wales took place over a period of 12 weeks from 19 June until 11 September.

Of the 379 responses received, 20 were received from organisations based in Wales such as the police, county councils and county borough councils.

Two consultation events took place took during the summer of 2003. The first event was held at Colywn Bay on 21 July for organisations from north Wales. Cardiff hosted the second event on 4 August, which was attended by organisations in south Wales.

The format at both events was the same. The Bill Team gave an extended presentation, followed by a full question and answer session.

Motor Vehicles

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many Government *(a)* cars, *(b)* vans and *(c)* trucks in use were built (i) in the United Kingdom, (ii) in the EU and (iii) outside the EU. [149968]

Mr. Alexander: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive, Mr. Nick Matheson, to write to my hon. Friend. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Public Services Audit

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will place in the Library a copy of the Cabinet Office paper containing an audit of public services referred to in *The Times* 14 January. [148758]

Mr. Alexander: Internal discussion and advice to Ministers remains confidential in line with exemption 2 set out in Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Details of progress against the Government's Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets are available via: departmental reports; the HM Treasury website; http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/performance/ and in a presentation by Professor Michael Barber at the Prime Minister's Press Conference on 30 July 2003; http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page4295.asp

Publicity Campaigns

Brian Cotter: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by his Department has spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04 (estimated); and if he will make a statement. [149623]

Mr. Alexander: Details of my Department's spend on advertising in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 (estimated) can be found in the table.

	Advertising (£000)
1997–98	144
1998–99	138
1999–2000	262
2000–01	464
2001–02	2,708
2002–03	400
2003–04 (estimated)	267

Information prior to 1997–98 is not held on our accounting system and is therefore available only at disproportionate cost.

Expenditure incurred on information campaigns is not separately identifiable on our accounting system. Any such expenditure is included within the advertising figures shown.

Expenditure incurred by non-departmental public bodies sponsored by my Department is not held on our accounting system and is therefore available only at disproportionate cost.

The increase in advertising expenditure from 1998–99 to 2000–01 from £138,000 to £464,000 is due to expenditure on recruitment advertising for posts within the Department. These posts range from administration and junior management level through to the senior civil service. Also included is recruitment advertising expenditure for specialist placements for the 'Development Centre', which is part of the Government Information and Communication Service.

The advertising figure for 2001–02 includes £2,491,000 incurred by the Office of the E-Envoy for the UK Online advertising campaign.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Norman Lamb: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what proportion of regulatory impact assessments fully complied with Government guidelines in terms of new content in 2003. [149420]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office Regulatory Impact Unit is working with Departments to ensure that Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) are consistent with the most recent guidance and are proportionate to the likely impact of the proposal. Information on overall compliance with the guidelines is not collected, but from April this year, Departments will have to provide information on better regulation, including their compliance with the RIA process and their use of RIAs, as part of their annual reporting requirements.

Special Advisers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether special advisers have access to the Knowledge Network; whether statistics are collected at constituency level by Government Departments specifically for use on the Network; and if he will make a statement. [148781]

Mr. Alexander: Access to the Knowledge Network is restricted to Ministers, their offices and civil servants, including special advisers, via the Government Secure Intranet. Government Departments do not collect statistics at constituency level specifically for use on the Knowledge Network.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which regional development agencies have *(a)* an office and *(b)* representatives situated outside the United Kingdom. [149703]

Jacqui Smith: I have been advised of the following answers by the individual Regional Development Agencies (RDAs).

Advantage West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands have offices in France (one person), Germany (one person), Sweden (two representatives who are not direct employees of the Agency) and Belgium (one person).

In North America, Advantage West Midlands shares representation with their partner agency, EMDA, under the British Midlands' brand. Together they have a total of five offices and seven full-time staff based in Washington, Boston, Chicago, San Jose and Toronto; they also employ the services of a telemarketing agency in North America. The British Midlands is also represented on a full-time basis in Japan with two staff. In South East Asia, India and Australia, the British Midlands has part-time representation with offices in Singapore, Mumbai and Sydney and a total of six agents.

East of England Development Agency (EEDA)

The East of England Developments Agency EEDA has an inward investment office in San Jose (Silicon Valley) a joint project between EEDA and Invest East of England. There are no representatives as the office is co-ordinated by the vice-president for business development at Invest East of England.

EEDA also subscribes to the East of England partnership office in Brussels and the Essex and East of England International Trade office in Jiangsu Province China (but does not have offices or representatives).

East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)

The East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) is represented in Europe by part-time agents in Germany (Munich—two staff) and Scandinavia (Malmo—one person); EMDA also employs a telemarketing agency in France.

In North America, EMDA shares representation with their partner agency, Advantage West Midlands, under the British Midlands' brand. Together they have a total of five offices and seven full-time staff based in Washington, Boston, Chicago, San Jose and Toronto; they also employ the services of a telemarketing agency in North America. The British Midlands is also represented on a full-time basis in Japan with two staff. In South East Asia, India and Australia, the British Midlands has part time representation with offices in Singapore, Mumbai and Sydney and a total of six agents.

The East Midlands Development Agency is also a partner in the East Midlands European Office (EMEO), based in Brussels. The partnership also includes the region's strategic local authorities, the Regional Assembly and the East Midlands Regional Local Government Association. In addition, EMDA line manages EMEO on behalf of the regional partnership.

London Development Agency (LDA)

The LDA is a partner in the London European Office, a staffed GLA partnership office in Brussels.

North West Development Agency (NMDA)

The North West Development Agency has an office with two members of staff (one full-time and one part-time) in Japan.

As part of a North of England collaboration (a joint venture with One NorthEast and Yorkshire Forward) there are offices in Australia (Sydney) and North America: Chicago (five people), Boston (two people), Atlanta (one person) and Los Angeles: (one person full-time and one person part-time).

The NWDA with the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) jointly fund an office and one member of staff in Brussels.

One NorthEast

One NorthEast has offices in China: Shanghai (two people) Japan: Osaka (one person, part-time) and Tokyo (two people), Korea: Seoul (one person), Taiwan: Taipei (one person).

As part of a North of England collaboration (a joint venture with North West Development Agency and Yorkshire Forward) there are offices and representatives in Australia (Sydney) and North America (Chicago, Boston, Atlanta and Los Angeles).

There is also a North of England Office in Brussels, managed by the Regional Assembly.

South East England Development Agency

The South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA) shares an officer post with the Regional Assembly operating from South East England House in Brussels, co-located and working with other partners from around the Region. SEEDA is also represented in Washington DC by Odell Simms & Associates and has a representative in each of the following cities: Berlin, San Diego, Boston, Shanghai, Seoul, Tokyo, Osaka and Sydney (NSW), the latter post being part-time.

South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)

The South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) have an office in Japan with four staff and in North America, SWRDA have a dispersed team of four staff, however there is no central office there.

Yorkshire Forward

Yorkshire Forward has offices and representatives in Japan and China.

As part of a North of England collaboration (a joint venture with North West Development Agency and OneNorth East) there are offices and representatives in Australia (Sydney) and North America (Chicago, Boston, Atlanta and Los Angeles).

Malcolm Bruce: To the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will provide a breakdown for each region of how her Department allocated its funding of the regional development agencies in 2003–04; and what amounts have been allocated to each region in each year since 1997. [147798]

Jacqui Smith: Eight RDAs were established in 1998 and their first full year of operation was in 1999–2000. The London Development Agency was established in 2000–01. The table shows the RDAs' grant allocation and expenditure for each of the financial years between 1999–2000 and 2002–03 and their initial allocations for 2003–04.

£ million

	1999–2000		*2000–01*		*2001–02*		*2002–03*		*2003–04*
RDA	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*	*Allocation*
Advantage West Midlands	108	103	124	113	171	141	205	204	221
East of England	30	30	40	36	63	55	89	88	85
East Midlands	46	41	77	67	97	86	102	101	118
London	n/a	n/a	268	235	289	266	296	295	291
North West	141	141	159	156	277	270	275	274	318
ONE North West	92	92	101	98	163	156	193	193	219
South East	64	63	75	73	111	97	115	112	123
South West of England	43	43	63	62	92	85	103	103	101
Yorkshire Forward	121	121	148	125	246	207	211	211	243
Totals	645	636	1,054	965	1,508	1,363	1,589	1,581	1,719

Note:

These figures are the grant paid to Agencies and expenditure funded by grant. The Agencies total income will also include EU grants, receipts from sales of property and rental income.

DTI's own contribution to the RDAs was £2 million in 1999–2000, £17 million in 2000–01, £57 million in 2001–02, £161 million in 2002–03 and £177.7million in 2003–04.

Research and Development

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to whom expenditure on research and development is distributed; how many staff are directly employed as a result; and how many research establishments of the Department and its agencies there are in each region and nation of the United Kingdom. [149637]

Ms Hewitt: Research and development expenditure is distributed to a range of bodies and principally via the research councils to higher education institutes and their own research establishments. Some 11,000 staff are directly employed by the research councils. The following table gives a regional and national breakdown of the councils' research establishments. Funding is also distributed to industry via schemes such as LINK. Figures for staff directly employed as a result of such funding are not available.

Region/country	*Number of research establishments*
East Midlands	4
East of England	13
London	7
North East	0
North West	4

Region/country	Number of research establishments
Northern Ireland	1
Scotland	15
South East	20
South West	11
Wales	2

Trade Agreements

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on proposals to improve rules of origin for economic partnership agreements. [148519]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK Government recognise the need for a review of the current preferential rules of origin. Support for less onerous regulations on rules of origin is outlined in the Government's 2000 White Paper, "Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor".

With a number of ACP regions now having reached the stage of launching Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations with the EU, there is an increased focus on some of the detailed issues facing EPAs, including rules of origin. An experts meeting on rules of origin for EPAs is planned for February 2004 in Brussels.

More generally on the issue of preferential rules of origin, the Commission (DG TAXUD) is consulting widely on this issue through its recently published Green Paper, "Future of Rules of Origin in Preferential Trade Agreements".

British Energy

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public subsidy has been given to British Energy *(a)* to cover cash shortfall for unexpected maintenance works and *(b)* for other reasons; how much interest is repayable; and when she expects the money to be repaid. [150213]

Mr. Timms: The credit facility is a loan facility to British Energy that must be repaid by the company under the terms of the restructuring plan. It has been provided in respect of only the company's working capital requirements and cash collateral for its trading activities. A commercial rate of interest of 1 per cent. over the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) is chargeable on amounts drawn for working capital, and a fee of 1 per cent. per annum on amounts drawn for cash collateral. The maximum amount available under the facility was £650 million but now stands at £200 million. As I said in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Anne Picking) on 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 780W, British Energy have repaid all outstanding amounts under the credit facility.

Bullying/Harassment

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps her Department is taking to encourage more employers to frame a formal policy on bullying and harassment in the workplace; [147901]

(2) what plans she has to improve the support available for employees who face bullying or harassment at work; [147902]

(3) what assessment her Department has made of the impact of current Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service guidance relating to bullying and harassment in the workplace. [147903]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government take bullying at work very seriously and believe that employees should be able to work without fear of being bullied or harassed by employers, fellow employees or anybody else.

There is a safety net of legislation already in existence that employees can turn to. This includes the: Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Protection from Harassment Act, Health and Safety Act, Employment Rights Act and the Employment Act 2002.

In addition New Employment Equality Regulations came into force last December protecting those experiencing discrimination, harassment and victimisation at work on grounds of sexual orientation or religion or belief. We are working to support the dissemination of high quality best practice information on the new regulations to employers, individuals and—importantly—advice giving organisations and agencies through the funding we have allocated in the current financial year.

The Health and Safety Executive are producing a set of management Standards. The Standards are designed to provide a yardstick for organisations by which they can gauge the levels of stress and other associated problems among staff thereby helping them to identify where action is required. One of these, the Relationship Management Standard, focuses on bullying.

Assisting with the development of best practice operations is a group, under ACAS management called Race and Equality Advisory Service (REAS). This team of advisers deliver practical, best practice equality advice to organisations. This complements ACAS's wider role of providing services to organisations to help their businesses to flourish.

Continuing the promotion of best practice is the Partnership at Work Fund administered by DTI. This has provided grants to support organisations wishing to focus on best practice initiatives specifically encouraging employees and employers to work together to resolve issues. A number of projects have focused on reducing bullying, while others have included it as part of their wider objectives.

Bullying and harassment is an area of growing importance in the work of ACAS. It uses multiple channels for dissemination of guidance including: publications (available in hard copy and through the internet); face to face training and seminars; advice via the ACAS National Helpline; and also more in depth focused work within workplaces Two publications—'Bullying and Harassment: A Guide for Managers and Employers' and 'Bullying and Harassment: A Guide for Employees' with an annual distribution of approximately 26,000 copies offer guidance and form the basis of training programmes and seminars organised by ACAS.

In 2003, around 200 seminars and training events were run focusing on the subject of bullying and harassment. The feedback from delegates to ACAS events is overwhelmingly positive with, across the board, 97 per cent. reporting that they were satisfied with the quality and content of their training. Follow up work with delegates in 2003, around 200 seminars and training events were run focussing on the subject of bullying and has also shown that the guidance offered by ACAS has positive and lasting benefits with 60 per cent. saying that they review policy and practice after attending ACAS events and around a third actually implemented change or introduced new policies after attending events.

The ACAS National Helpline also plays an important role in disseminating guidance. Around 600 calls are received monthly on this issue. Overall the feedback on the helpline is found to be extremely beneficial with 92 per cent. reporting satisfaction with the service received from the Helpline and 84 per cent. of callers reporting that they found the information provided was valuable in fully answering their inquiry.

Business Link

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list *(a)* the allocations to area-based Business Link teams, *(b)* the expenditure per head of population in each area and *(c)* the basis formula for the distribution of resources to each area for (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [149624]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* A breakdown of Business Link Operator (BLO) Core Services allocations for the 2003–04 financial year, together with a breakdown of the allocations divided by resident adult (16+) population data, by individual BLO is shown in the following table

The allocation formula for 2003–04 and 2004–05 is the same. However the data which make up the constituent parts of the formula was updated where possible for 2004–05, resulting in changes between these years. The formula is made up of the following four elements.

1. £99.5 million is allocated in line with current business population (indicator used is the Inter Departmental Business Register for all PAYE and VAT registrations).

2. £20 million for Business Start-ups. Funding is awarded in line in reverse proportion to an aspirational rate of 75 VAT registrations per 10,000 adult population (indicator used is VAT Registrations published by SBS and Resident Adult (16+) population data supplied by the ONS)

3. £10 million is allocated in line with Social Deprivation Index (indicator used is Deprivation data, weighted 2000 indices, produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

4. £10 million is allocated in line with population (indicator used is latest Resident Adult (16+) population data supplied by the ONS).

£

Business Link Area	*BLO CS Allocation 2003–04*	*BLO CS Expenditure per head of population*[1]
County Durham	1,159,764	2.90
Northumberland	823,758	3.28
Tees Valley	1,460,480	2.88
Tyne and Wear	2,473,608	2.85
Cheshire and Warrington	2,427,030	3.48
Cumbria	1,472,109	3.70
E. Lancashire	1,294,306	3.21
Manchester	3,712,759	3.46
Merseyside	3,609,837	3.06
N and W Lancashire	2,482,841	3.41
North Manchester	2,868,225	3.13
Humberside	2,310,105	3.32
N. Yorkshire	2,309,061	3.76
S. Yorkshire	3,045,706	3.00
W. Yorkshire	5,222,016	3.16
Derbyshire	2,502,742	3.24
Leicestershire	2,460,230	3.42
Lincolnshire and Rutland	1,960,561	3.49
Northamptonshire	1,721,966	3.41
Nottinghamshire	2,562,962	3.11
Birmingham and Solihull	2,989,291	3.24
Black Country	2,724,755	3.18
Coventry and Warwickshire	2,202,117	3.36
Hereford and Worcs	2,152,122	3.69
Shropshire	1,277,861	3.58
Staffordshire	2,743,968	3.26
Bedfordshire	1,515,800	3.39
Cambridgeshire	2,075,620	3.61
Essex	4,582,147	3.53
Hertfordshire	3,145,262	3.83
Norfolk	2,298,503	3.49
Suffolk	1,979,534	3.66
London	23,655,555	4.00
Kent	4,287,157	3.40
M. Keynes, Oxon, Bucks	4,093,239	3.97
Surrey	3,536,940	4.14
Sussex	4,440,986	3.63
Hampshire	5,025,619	3.49
Dorset	2,079,099	3.62
Berkshire	2,447,040	3.83
Devon and Cornwall	4,649,136	3.58
Gloucestershire	1,715,191	3.76
Somerset	1,527,832	3.76
West	2,759,881	3.45
Wiltshire	1,715,281	3.50

[1] BLO CS allocations are divided by the resident adult (16+) population (latest data is mid-year 2002 (rounded to the nearest hundred)

Source

Office for National Statistics (ONS))

Civil Servants (Disabilities)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in meeting targets for the proportion of people with disabilities in senior posts in her Department. [145997]

Ms Hewitt: In 2000, benchmarks for staff with disabilities in DTI were set across all grades. Targets set internally for staff in senior civil service were:

Percentage

	Benchmark for SCS posts
2000 (base year)	3.8
2002	3.9
2004	4.2
2005	4.7

The Cabinet Office publishes statistical information about senior civil servants with disabilities on its website http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/documents/pdf/

disability-pct03.pdf. This shows that as of 1 April 2003, 4.0 per cent. of DTI HQ staff in the senior civil service had a disability.

I have recently launched the DTI Disability@Work strategy to further improve career opportunities for staff with disabilities. I expect this will benefit staff at all levels and help increase our representation throughout the grades over time.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will set out the number of employees in her Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148987]

Ms Hewitt: The information requested is in the following table:

Type of disability	*Number of staff*[1]
Hearing impairment	33
Visual impairment	23
Speech impairment	[2]—
Learning difficulty	5
Mental illness	13
Mobility impairment	70
Physical co-ordination	32
Reduced physical capacity	78
Severe disfigurement	[2]—
Other	29
Total staff with disabilities	287
Total DTI staff	4,031

[1] Data as at 1 January 2004.

[2] Five or less individuals; the DTI code of practice precludes us from reporting the numbers to preserve confidentiality.

Clergy Employment Rights

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 3 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 102W, when she will make an announcement regarding the implementation of section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 in relation to employment rights for clergy. [149818]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have been considering the current coverage of employment protections as part of the Employment Status Review, including the position of the clergy; we hope to publish a Government response shortly. The Government believe that all workers should be treated fairly, and welcomes the fact that the Church of England is giving serious consideration to the issue of employment protections for its clergy.

Credit Agencies

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if her Department will put in place regulations to oblige credit agencies to update their records on individuals; and if she will make a statement. [145399]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Individuals have the right, under existing legislation, to ask for their credit reference file to be amended if it contains information which is incorrect or which is about people with whom they have no financial connection.

If the credit reference agency refuses to comply with an individual's request they can ask the Information Commissioner to assess whether or not this decision is correct under the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or on 01625 545700.

Departmental Advertising

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much *(a)* her Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by her Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since 1995–96; what her estimate is for 2003–04; and if she will make a statement. [149721]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 21 January 2004]*: For expenditure on advertising by my Department through COI from 1995–96 to 2000–01. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Mr. Cable) on 20 November 2001, *Official Report*, column 162W. Expenditure for 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 (to date) was £6,610,240, £13,741,906 and £2,044,497 respectively. These figures include advertising by the Small Business Service and exclude VAT.

Information on publicity expenditure from centrally held budgets is contained in the Government's Expenditure Plans and, more recently, the DTI's annual Departmental Report, which are available in the Libraries of the House. Figures relating to other information campaigns, and information on publicity and advertising by NDPBs, are not held centrally and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Letter from Claire Clancy to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 26 January 2004:

I am responding to your recent Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on behalf of Companies House, which is an Executive Agency of the DTI. The expenditure on publicity and advertising is as follows:

£000

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*Forecast 2003–04*
Publicity	199	237	322	252	343
Advertising	391	401	586	526	491

Data for years 1995–96 to 1998–99 are not readily available and can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Letter from Desmond Flynn to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 26 January 2004:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply to you on behalf of The Insolvency Service in respect of your question (2003/980) asked how much *(a)* her Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by her Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since 1995–96; what her estimate is for 2003–04.

Information on expenditure by The Insolvency Service Executive Agency through the Central Office of Information is only available from 1999 onwards. This publicity is the release of information on successful orders to disqualify directors under the Disqualification of Directors Act 1986. The expenditure was:

£000

	Amount
1999–2000	115,000
2000–2001	112,000
2001–2002	119,000
2002–2003	81,000
Estimated to end 2003–04	80,105

No other publicity or information campaigns have been carried out by The Insolvency Service in the period 1995 to date.

Letter from Roger Heathcote to Mr. Malcolm Bruce dated, 26 January 2004:

You tabled a question on 19 January 2004 to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, asking how much *(a)* her Department and *(b)* each agency and non departmental public body sponsored by her Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since 1995–96; what her estimate is for 2003–04; and if she will make a statement. I have been asked to reply in respect of the Employment Tribunals Service (ETS) which is an executive agency of the DTI.

The Employment Tribunals Service has not had and will have no expenditure on advertising or information campaigns for the years in question.

Letter from Caren Fullerton in Ron Marchants' absence to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 26 January 2004:

I am replying to this parliamentary question, tabled on 19 January 2004, regarding the amount spent on advertising and information campaigns.

The Patent Office, an executive Agency of the DTI, has undertaken a number of activities aimed at highlighting the important contribution to innovation in the knowledge economy made by Intellectual Property to business, education and the wider community throughout the UK. The priority has been to develop partnerships with key organisations to deliver this message through the network of business advisors and information providers available in the UK to create an "IP literate society".

To achieve this aim we have used strategic advertising to target specific audiences. New guidance literature on patents has been developed which underline the office's commitment.

£000

1995–96	1,963
1996–97	1,719
1997–98	8,908
1998–99	12,364
1999–2000	2,951
2000–01	7,391
2001–02	4,822
2002–03	3,596
2003–04	1,500

The amount spent on information campaigns is only available from 2000–01. To obtain figures for early years would involve disproportionate costs. These figures are:

£000

2000–01	30,037
2001–02	82,814
2002–03	104,651
2003–04	160,000

In addition to the above the Patent Office maintains two internet websites (www.patent.gov.uk and www.intellectual-property.gov.uk which are used to advertise our services and events.

Letter from Dr. J. W. Llewellyn to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 26 January 2004:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply on behalf of the National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML) to your question about the Agency's spend on advertising and information campaigns for each year since 1995–96.

The Agency has a small publicity budget but the financial figures do not differentiate between advertising and information campaigns. Figures are not easily retrievable prior to 1999–2000. Expenditure on publicity for each year since 1999–2000 is as follows:

	Expenditure (£000)
1995–96	Not available
1996–97	Not available
1997–98	Not available
1998–99	Not available
1999–2000	37
2000–01	59
2001–02	88
2002–03	60
2003–04 (Estimate)	80

Departmental Grants

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding was allocated for small business support under the Smart scheme from the time of its inception to its closure; and how much of this money was distributed directly to grant recipients. [145513]

Nigel Griffiths: Following a small pilot in 1986, the full Smart scheme was launched in 1988. Initially, there was no separately identifiable funding allocation for the scheme within the larger "Innovation Budget" which provided funds for several other schemes. Smart originally operated as a competition with a fixed number of "Stage 1", or feasibility, awards but a variable number of "Stage 2", or development, awards. The SPUR scheme was introduced in 1991 and merged with Smart in 1997. Since that time there has been a separate provision for the expanded Smart. Expenditure on Smart will occur for several years yet as existing projects progress. Provision, where separately identified, and expenditure were as follows:

£ million

Financial year	Expenditure Plans or Provision where separately identified[1]	Expenditure[1]
1988–89	—	3.0
1989–90	—	5.0
1990–91	—	9.0
1991–92	—	12.3
1992–93	—	18.0
1993–94	—	21.5
1994–95	21.6	21.9
1995–96	16.5	20.1
1996–97	—	20.5
1997–98	30.0	25.8
1998—99	30.0	24.9
1999–2000	32.1	26.5
2000–01	35.9	27.3

£ million

Financial year	Expenditure Plans or Provision where separately identified[1]	Expenditure[1]
2001–02	27	23.7
2002–03	27	32.1

[1] Including SPUR from 1991.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding has been allocated to finance the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships scheme; and to what timescale this funding applies. [145514]

Nigel Griffiths: DTI funding for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships in F/Y 2004–05, combined with the pre-existing commitments for the Teaching Company Scheme (TCS), which it succeeds, is planned to continue at about the same level as the expenditure in the current financial year, which is approximately £18 million. About a future £7 million per annum is currently provided by other pubic sector bodies.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding has been allocated for the new Grant for Research and Development scheme; and over what timescale this funding will be available. [145515]

Nigel Griffiths: An initial £100 million has been allocated for projects commencing in the financial years 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06. There will be expenditure on those projects until 2010.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding her Department is providing in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* in future years to support the Promoting Women's Enterprise Support Initiative. [145520]

Jacqui Smith: DTI is not aware of a programme entitled Promoting Women's Enterprise Support Initiative. It is believed that this is a reference to the measures the Government are taking to support the growth of women's enterprise nationally as they implement the recommendations of the Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise launched last year.

In this regard, the Government will continue, in this and future years, to fund the promotion of women's enterprise through their key partners—in particular, the Business Link network and through their work with Regional Development agencies and a number of women's enterprise organisations.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria her Department uses when deciding whether a leaflet which it publishes is to be made available only on its website. [149560]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department decides whether a leaflet should be published only on the internet on a case-by-case basis. Officials consider the intended target audience of the leaflet, whether the audience is likely to have internet access and the cost of publishing the document in hard copy. Where the publication is a lengthy or technical document, the Department may produce a hard copy executive summary, with the full document available only on the internet.

The Department constantly reviews feedback we receive on this issue to ensure that our publications are accessible to those who need them.

Agricultural Produce (Dumping)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what quantitative assessment she has made of the impact of dumping of agricultural produce by developed countries on the economies and living standards of developing countries. [146639]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The best source of information on this topic are the large number of studies which have already been undertaken by international organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD and the OECD, and by charitable organisations such as Oxfam. The work of these organisations demonstrates through individual case studies the adverse effects which dumping of subsidised agricultural products on world markets can have on developing country economies. It remains, however, very difficult to make an accurate quantitative economic assessment of the overall impact of dumping of subsidised agricultural produce on developing country markets. The World Bank have, however, estimated that the comprehensive reform of all aspects of agricultural policies in developed countries could boost the income of developing countries by as much as $100 billion.

EU Regional Funding

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much EU regional funding has been invested in *(a)* the North West region and *(b)* Merseyside in each of the last five years. [147167]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows spend over the last five years against the Objective 1, 2 and 3 EU funding streams. Objective 1 applies only to Merseyside, Objective 2 and 3 cover a range of areas across the North West, except for Merseyside.

£

Financial year	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
1999	101,303,112	37,446,891	41,642,065
2000	61,082,497	80,373,232	10,989,260
2001	123,604,787	83,988,081	26,187,632
2002	98,520,307	21,163,881	47,490,296
2003	84,503,461	138,730,194	27,052,777
Total	470,342,202	361,702,279	153,362,030

Fireworks Act

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she plans to carry out a further fireworks monitoring exercise between October 2004 and January 2005 to assess the effectiveness of the Fireworks Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [149012]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department will be assessing the effectiveness of regulations made under the Fireworks Act 2003 by using the following sources of information:

The 2004 fireworks injury statistics compared to data from previous years;

Information pertaining to retailer compliance provided by the Local Authority Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS);

The level of prosecutions under the legislation in conjunction with police reports on, among other things, firework misuse in the street; and

The volume of complaints received from members of the public in relation to previous years.

Using this data, the effectiveness of regulations will be better judged after the fireworks season 2004 and new year festivities of 2004–05.

Friction Dynamex

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answers of 13 January 2004, *Official Report,* column 694W, on debarred directors, and column 706W, on Strikes (Dismissal), if she will disqualify Mr. J. Davies of Friction Dynamex as a company director. [149608]

Mr. Sutcliffe: An insolvency practitioner appointed to an insolvent company—which is one that has entered insolvent liquidation, administration, or administrative receivership—has a duty to report to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on the conduct of the directors of that company. This report is usually submitted to The Insolvency Service within six months of the insolvency practitioner's appointment. Once the report has been received it is reviewed by The Insolvency Service to ascertain whether disqualification proceedings are in the public interest.

In the case of Friction Dynamics Ltd.—the company to which it is presumed then question relates—no report has yet been received from the insolvency practitioner appointed.

The Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 applies only to directors of a company. Therefore unless an individual can be shown to have been a director or to have acted as a director of a company in insolvency proceedings, they cannot be disqualified under this Act. Mr. J. Davies is not shown as a director of Friction Dynamics Ltd. but is believed to be a former employee.

Germany

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with her German counterpart regarding the labour practices of the UK subsidiaries of *(a)* Deutsche Telekom AG and *(b)* other companies where the German Government retains controlling or significant shareholdings. [149576]

Mr. Sutcliffe: All UK subsidiaries of foreign-owned companies are subject to UK labour law. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has not had discussions with her German counterpart regarding the labour practices of UK subsidiaries of any company where the German Government retains significant shareholdings. However, the managing director of T-Mobile has been invited to meet with me as Minister responsible for Employment Relations to discuss the recent union recognition discussions at the company.

Home Security Systems

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to prevent companies installing home security systems from falsely claiming that their systems are approved by the police or that their work is being carried out in conjunction with the police or the local authority. [149345]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is an offence under the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 to make false claims about goods or services being supplied in the course of business. This includes false statements, about goods being tested or approved by any person, or about services being examined, approved or evaluated by any person. Local Authority Trading Standards Departments are responsible for enforcing the Act.

Honduras

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what quantitative assessment she has made of the effect of the opening 10 years ago of the market in Honduras to subsidised rice imports from the United States on *(a)* the economy and *(b)* living standards in Honduras. [149128]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: None.

Internet Usage

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of *(a)* under 15-year-olds, *(b)* 15 to 24-year-olds, *(c)* 25 to 34-year-olds, *(d)* 35 to 44-year-olds, *(e)* 45 to 54-year-olds, *(f)* 55 to 64-year-olds and *(g)* over 65-year-olds are regular users of the internet. [146118]

Mr. Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

58 per cent. of the adult population are now regular users of the internet compared to 40 per cent. in October 2000. The figures in the table from the National Statistics Omnibus survey show adults in Great Britain who had accessed the internet in the three months prior to interview in October 2003. They are broken down by age group as follows:

Age in years	*Percentage*
16 to 24	88
25 to 44	76
45 to 54	64
55 to 64	45
65 and over	16

Full results are available at www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/intc1203.pdf

While the ONS Omnibus survey only focuses on those over 16, DfES commission a 'young people and ICT' survey each year. The latest results, from a survey in Autumn 2002 found that 84 per cent. of 5 to 18-year-olds use the internet. Full results are available at www.becta.org.uk.

Miners' Compensation

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what procedure is in place to pay the British Coal component part of miners' health

compensation claims in cases where negotiations are continuing with private small mines; and if she will make a statement. [148678]

Nigel Griffiths: The procedures in place are that the Department is making interim payments—of 75 per cent. of the estimated share of general damages payable by British Coal—to claimants who have worked for both British Coal and a small private mine, where no other interims have been paid previously. The first of these interim payments was made in December 2003. Where an interim payment has been paid previously—for example, on the basis that the claimant has previously received a DWP payment for respiratory disease—the Department will reassess the claim after having completed interim payments to those claimants who have received no payments, and will ensure that compensation is topped up to the equivalent of 75 per cent. of estimated British Coal share of general damages.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in settling chest disease claims from mineworkers who worked *(a)* in dirty surface environments and *(b)* underground only for short periods. [150843]

Nigel Griffiths: Claimants who worked underground for short periods are already eligible to claim compensation for respiratory disease under the Claims Handling Agreement (CHA).

With regard to discussions on surface dusty workers and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the Judge has instructed the claimants' solicitors' co-ordinating group (CG) to identify lead claimants and to investigate their medical circumstances and dust exposure. The Department is assisting the CG in this process by giving access to British Coal dust records. The CG are to report back to the Judge in February.

The Department and the CG are also in discussions about allowing surface only workers to claim for chronic bronchitis (CB) and temporary exacerbation of asthma (TEA), on the basis of proposals made by the Department to the CG. Any arrangement relating to claims for COPD, CB or TEA for surface workers would not be subject to the cut-off date agreed for the underground scheme.

Motor Industry

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the operation of the Rover Task Force. [142124]

Jacqui Smith: The Rover Task Force (RTF) was set up in 2000 to look at the potential effects on the region's economy of the then expected decline of Rover and its supply industry—which was a severe risk at the time of the BMW withdrawal from the company. The report it produced has been carried forward primarily by Advantage West Midlands (the RDA). It remains one of the best examples of speedy response to a crisis coupled with long-term action to address structural change.

There are three themes arising from the RTF:

Modernisation—support to the automotive supply chain in its continuous improvement activity;

Diversification—promotion of and support to encourage businesses to engage in new activity to enable the region to be less dependent on its traditional industries; and

Regeneration—the creation of High Tech Corridors to support the modernisation and diversification of the region's economy by attracting and developing more high tech, high value added businesses by virtue of the presence of research institutions, universities and property opportunities.

Modernisation and Diversification projects are continuing with spend on target and outputs exceeding or in line with expectations. For example, at end of 2002–03 over 2,500 jobs have been safeguarded against a target of 1,700. Equally on the Regeneration agenda, a strategy is in place for High Tech Corridors to provide long-term sustainable development of the region.

Museums (Genetic Research)

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the research that has been carried out following studies of genetic materials held in British museums. [145593]

Ms Hewitt: Museums hold a great deal of material that could be classed as genetic material: from human, animal or insect remains to collections of seeds and plants samples, even marine sediments contain genetic material which could be used in research.

There are many of possible funders including the Government Departments, devolved Administrations, Research Councils, universities, charities and the museums themselves. There is no central record of all the research funded by these different bodies or of the research carried out on the different sources of genetic material and it would be cost prohibitive to gather it.

National Business Angels Network

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what sums of money put into the National Business Angels Network have been written off. [150195]

Nigel Griffiths: None.

Project Funding

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding has been provided by her Department to help finance *(a)* the Passport to Export Success scheme, *(b)* the Overseas Project Fund, *(c)* the British Overseas Industrial Placement, *(d)* the Outward Missions Support Unit, *(e)* inward trade missions, *(f)* the Export Promoter Initiatives, *(g)* the Export Marketing Research Initiative, *(h)* the Export Communications Review, *(i)* the Framework Programme 6 and *(j)* the Link Collaborative Research Initiative for each financial year since the inception of each; what funding has been allocated to finance each in future financial years; and if she

will estimate the extent to which businesses have benefited from each initiative to date. [149446]

Ms Hewitt: The schemes at *(a)* to *(h)* are administered by UK Trade and Investment (a joint FCO/DTI Department), and those at *(i)* and *(j)* by the Office of Science and Technology (OST) at the DTI.

The funding figures available for UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) trade support schemes, and projected funding, are as follows.

(a) to (h): Funding details for UK Trade and Investment trade support schemes:

Since 2001, funding has been provided to the schemes as follows:

£ million

	Outturn			*Est. outturn*	*Plans*	
	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
(a) Passport to Export	[1]0	2.1	3.6	5.5	5.0	5.0
(b) Overseas Project Fund	2.1	2.9	2.4	2.5	2.3	0.7
(c) British Ovs. Industrial Placement Scheme (BOND)	0.28	0.3	0.3	0.3	0	0
(d) Outward Missions Scheme[2]	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3
(e) Inward Missions Scheme	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
(f) Export Promoters Scheme	4.4	3.0	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.9
(g) Export Market Research Initiative	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
(h) Export Communications Review	0.15	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

[1] Scheme under development.
[2] Vertical missions will be subsumed into the Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Abroad (SESA) scheme as of 1 April 2004.

The BOND scheme at *(c)* ends in March 2004.

The support provided by UK Trade and Investment helps businesses to trade successfully in international markets. Those that do so are shown by independent research to be more productive, to pay higher wages and to be more capital intensive than those that do not. The current formal evaluation of the benefits to business from UKTI trade schemes is contained in UKTI's (then British Trade International) Departmental Report (Cm 5915) of May 2003, and in the Autumn Performance Report (Cm 5711) of December 2003, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House. Details of UKTI's 2003–04 performance measurement will be available in late February 2004, and will be included in UKTI's Departmental Report to be published in April 2004.

(i) the Framework Programme 6

The EU's Framework Programmes are funded from the EU budget, not DTI. The current budget for the period 2002 to 2006 is €17.5 billion. The programme supports a range of activities including collaborative research and technological development, researcher mobility, scientific infrastructure and co-ordination of national research funding. The Government's Memorandum and response to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry (UK Science and Europe: Value for Money?) in 2003 outlined evidence for the benefit to the UK. The Government are examining these issues further in preparation for negotiation of the next programme. UK businesses benefit from participation in the programme in terms of funding, gaining access to European markets and researchers and participation/risk sharing in R&D on cutting edge technologies.

(j) the Link Collaborative Research Initiative

My Department has funded the LINK Collaborative Research scheme as follows:

£000

	DTI	*Research Councils*	*Total*
1988–97 cumulative	86,873.5	70,369.1	157,242.6
1997–98	11,690.5	13,004.7	24,695.2
1998–99	9,498.1	20,307.3	29,805.4
1999–2000	7,475.1	21,968.2	29,443.3
2000–01	7,330.4	23,403.7	30,734.1
2001–02	9,887.6	23,656.3	33,543.9
2002–03	12,662.1	21,013.2	33,675.3
Total to 2002–03	145,417.3	193,722.5	33,9139.8

No specific funding amount is allocated for future years but follows the assessment of proposals for LINK Collaborative Research programmes.

Fourteen Government Departments and Research Councils sponsor LINK Collaborative Research. Participating businesses, which provide at least matching support for all Government funding, benefit from involvement in the scheme in a variety of ways. The report of a recent independent Strategic Review of LINK Collaborative Research included estimates of the economic benefits of LINK projects to UK business as follows.

Extra business turnover: £700 million-£2,400 million[1]

Increased profit: £250 million-£500 million[1]

Increased employment: 15,000–25,000 posts[1]

[1] Figures are low and high estimates for the direct effect of LINK Collaborative Research on the UK economy to 2000–01.

Relocation Offshore

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what research has been undertaken by her Department on consumer attitudes to locating call centre jobs and services offshore; [149200]

(2) what research has been undertaken by her Department to assess the regional impact of locating services and jobs offshore. [149201]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* My Department has not undertaken any research specifically on consumer attitudes to offshoring call centre jobs and services. The DTI paper "Services and Offshoring: The Impact of Increasing International Competition on Services", published on 5 December, outlined the main issues on offshoring and highlights initial areas identified for further research. It invites all those with an interest in the wider offshoring debate, including businesses, employees and their unions, and consumer groups, to share their views with us. On 2 February I will be hosting a roundtable on offshoring with companies and organisations interested in offshoring issues. My Department is also commissioning research on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of the UK's call centre industry to help identify any appropriate actions which need to be taken by industry or Government in response to the increasingly global market for call centre services.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what research has been *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* undertaken by her Department to assess the economic costs and benefits to the labour market, in particular to women, of UK call centre jobs being located offshore; [149202]

(2) what research her Department has undertaken into whether costs savings are achieved by those UK companies who have located jobs abroad; and whether cost savings are passed on to the consumer; [149203]

(3) what assessment has been made by her Department of *(a)* the long-term trends in moving UK jobs and services abroad and *(b)* the benefits derived by UK manufacturing, utilities and financial services; [149522]

(4) if she will make a statement on the effect of offshoring jobs abroad on UK trade and industry; [149523]

(5) what assessment has been made of the quality of customer service achieved by those companies which have offshored jobs abroad; and how customer service has changed. [149525]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* My Department has not commissioned or undertaken any research on the specific issue of economic costs and benefits to the labour market, in particular to women, of UK call centre jobs being located offshore. My Department is commissioning a study on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of the UK's call centre industry. The study will help to identify any appropriate actions that need to be taken by industry or Government in response to the increasingly global market for call centre services.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will publish her Department's study into offshoring of UK call centre jobs. [149524]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The study will examine the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centres including the impact of offshoring. Subject to progress of the study, we will publish a report on its findings in April 2004.

Renewable Energy (Cambridgeshire)

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will publish a list of pending applications for windfarm developments in Cambridgeshire, giving their *(a)* location and *(b)* proposed output in KW hours. [149677]

Mr. Timms: Proposals to construct and operate generating stations with a capacity greater than 50 megawatts (MW) require my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989.

There are no applications for her consent to construct windfarms in Cambridgeshire.

Central Government does not hold records of proposals for on-shore windfarms below 50MW as these fall to be determined by the local planning authority under the normal planning regime.

Strategic Export Controls (Israel)

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what approvals have been given since the period covered by the last Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls for the export to Israel of categories of equipment covering *(a)* leg irons, *(b)* electric shock belts, *(c)* tear gas, *(d)* mortars, *(e)* rocket launchers, *(f)* anti-tank weapons, *(g)* military explosives, *(h)* infra-red and radar sensors and *(i)* chemical and biological agents. [149337]

Nigel Griffiths: Details of export licences approved for Israel in 2003 will be published in the 2003 Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls later this year. I can however confirm that, following the then Foreign Secretary's announcement in 1997 of a ban on the export and transhipment through the UK of equipment which has been shown to be used for torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, items such as leg irons and electric shock belts are never approved for export from the UK. Similarly, in 2003 the Government did not authorise tear gas for export to Israel.

Wind Farms

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list applications for wind farm developments in Lancashire, broken down by *(a)* location and *(b)* output in kw per hour. [149967]

Mr. Timms: Proposals to construct and operate generating stations with a capacity greater than 50 megawatts (MW) require the Secretary of State's consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989.

She is currently considering one application for her consent to construct a 65 MW wind farm at Scout Moor. The applicant estimates that the on site wind analysis

indicates a likely capacity factor of 35 per cent. which would indicate that the proposed wind farm would generate some 197,000,000 kWh per annum.

Central Government do not hold records of proposals for on shore wind farms at or below 50 MW as they fall to be determined by the local planning authority under the normal planning regime.

Transdepartmental Science and Technology Group

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will break down how funding for knowledge transfer programmes was allocated in 2003–04; and what amounts were allocated in each year since 1997. [147800]

Ms Hewitt: The information is as follows:

£ million

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Science Enterprise Challenge	25	—	—	5	10	—	—
University Challenge	10	10	20	5	—	—	—
Higher Education Innovation Fund (OST)	—	—	20	20	40	61	70
Higher Education Innovation Fund (DfES)	—	—	—	—	20	20	20
Public Sector Research Establishment	—	—	10	—	—	5	10
Total	35	10	50	30	70	86	100

There was no expenditure prior to 1999, as the first of these programmes were announced in the pre-Budget statement November 1998. The Higher Education Innovation Fund is run jointly with DfES and their contributions have been included in the table. A number of other DTI initiatives contribute to knowledge transfer, but are recorded under separate headings in DTI's annual report.

Work-Life Balance

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the full report on the Work-Life Balance survey will be published. [150348]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Second Work-Life Balance Study: Results from the Employers' Survey report was published in November 2003 and can be found at www.dti.gov.uk/er/infomr.htm. The accompanying employee survey report will be published in spring 2004, although preliminary findings can be found at www.dti.gov.uk/er/emar/wibstwo_employee.pdf.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the level of discrimination against pregnant women in the workplace. [150349]

Ms Hewitt: There has been no formal assessment of the level of discrimination against pregnant women in the workplace. However, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) launched a formal investigation into pregnancy discrimination on 1 September 2003 using its powers under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The final report is expected in February 2005.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he plans to take *(a)* to make council tax benefit more accessible for pensioners through (i) a simpler benefit and (ii) simpler claim forms and *(b)* to ensure effective administration of the benefit; and if he will make a statement. [148234]

Mr. Pond: We have recently introduced a single, streamlined, claim form for claiming both housing benefit and council tax benefit; we are now rolling out a shortened version for pensioners, which will simplify the claims process even further.

On-going practical support to local authorities is being provided through the Help Team, monitoring teams, and the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate to help remove barriers to poor performance. We are maintaining the investment in the Performance Standards Fund over this and the next two years, amounting to some £200 million over all.

From 1 April 2004, we are abolishing the current restriction whereby people living in band F, G or H properties have their council tax benefit restricted to the maximum help available for band E properties.

In addition we will be taking forward the council tax benefit take-up campaign, which was announced on 15 December 2003, to support authorities in ensuring that those entitled to help with their council tax bills claim council tax benefit.

Stakeholder Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the average level of employer contributions, net of tax relief, into stakeholder pension schemes since their introduction. [150458]

Malcolm Wicks: Inland Revenue data show that in 2001–02 the average contribution to stakeholder pension schemes made by employers was £420 per annum.

This figure represents the average contribution for the financial year 2001–02 to schemes where an employer is contributing. The data are for the full year and does not include a scheme start date, so where a scheme was started in-year, although the contributions would only have been made for part of the year they have been averaged over 12 months. Therefore the estimate will not reflect the true annual average if the scheme had operated for a full year.

At present comparable figures for subsequent years are not yet available as although we have data on total contributions made and number of schemes receiving

tax relief, data showing the schemes which received employer contributions has not yet been released; data for 2002–03 will become available in summer 2004.

Between 2001–02 and 2002–03 total contributions to stakeholder schemes by employers have risen by 267 per cent. from £150 million per annum to £400 million per annum.

Advice Organisations

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the overlap between existing Citizens Advice Bureaux and the new advice-based organisations funded by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [148528]

Mr. Pond: Our Agencies provide advice to people on those areas for which this Department is responsible, ensuring that people understand their rights and responsibilities within the benefit system, the benefits that they are entitled to, the job opportunities open to them, and what services are available to improve their job prospects. However, we do not give the broad range of advice that is available from Citizens Advice Bureaux.

In some cases, the best way to provide our services is in conjunction with other organisations within the community. For example, Jobcentre Plus is working with Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change on its Neighbourhood Pathway project. It is providing its knowledge and skills in helping people back in to work, and has invested £883,890 during the period April 2003 to December 2003, supporting 420 people into work and 320 people into training and mainstream Jobcentre Plus programmes.

Benefit Payments (Computer Downtime)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many hours of system downtime relating to the computer dealing with direct payment there have been in each month since it was introduced. [147653]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 13 January 2004]*: Information is not available in the format requested.

The Department has contingency arrangements in place to maintain continuity of benefit payment, in the unlikely event of benefit system failure.

The figures for Service Availability across all Departmental Systems over the past 6 months has been 99.98 per cent. Availability has not dipped under the 99.2 per cent. target over the past year.

Carers Allowance

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people *(a)* over and *(b)* under 65 were entitled to carers allowance but did not receive payment in each (i) constituency and (ii) local authority area in London in the last year for which figures are available. [146088]

Maria Eagle: Information on people in London local authorities who are entitled to Carers Allowance but are not receiving a payment due to the overlapping benefit rules, as at 31 August 2003, the latest data available is given in the table.

Local Authority	*All*	*Under 65*	*65 and over*
All	9,695	4,625	5,070
City of London	5	—	5
Barking and Dagenham	365	170	195
Barnet	365	185	185
Bexley	355	150	205
Brent	300	150	155
Bromley	370	190	180
Camden	230	110	120
Croydon	395	190	205
Ealing	345	175	170
Enfield	325	155	170
Greenwich	525	190	335
Hackney	275	135	140
Hammersmith and Fulham	180	95	85
Haringey	240	125	115
Harrow	225	105	120
Havering	520	205	315
Hillingdon	370	175	190
Hounslow	325	145	180
Islington	280	135	145
Kensington and Chelsea	85	35	50
Kingston upon Thames	135	60	75
Lambeth	280	145	135
Lewisham	350	170	180
Merton	215	90	120
Newham	395	220	180
Redbridge	380	200	180
Richmond upon Thames	155	70	85
Southwark	315	165	150
Sutton	260	115	145
Tower Hamlets	310	155	150
Waltham Forest	325	160	165
Wandsworth	340	160	180
Westminster	165	95	70

Information on people in London Parliamentary Constituencies who are entitled to Carers Allowance but are not receiving a payment due to the overlapping benefit rules, as at 31 August 2003, the latest data available is given in the table.

Parliamentary Constituency	*All*	*Under 65*	*65 and over*
All	9,695	4,625	5,070
Barking	180	90	90
Battersea	100	45	60
Beckenham	105	50	55
Bethnal Green and Bow	170	80	90
Bexleyheath and Crayford	155	65	90
Brent East	95	50	45
Brent North	110	55	55
Brent South	95	45	50
Brentford and Isleworth	150	70	80
Bromley and Chislehurst	115	60	55
Camberwell and Peckham	110	60	50
Carshalton and Wallington	145	60	85
Chingford and Woodford Green	140	55	85
Chipping Barnet	115	60	55
Cities of London and Westminster	70	35	30
Croydon Central	140	65	75
Croydon North	145	75	75
Croydon South	110	55	55
Dagenham	185	80	105
Dulwich and West Norwood	105	60	50
Ealing Acton and Shepherds Bush	110	55	55
Ealing North	135	70	65
Ealing Southall	160	85	75
East Ham	160	85	75

Parliamentary Constituency	All	Under 65	65 and over
Edmonton	125	60	60
Eltham	205	60	145
Enfield North	95	50	45
Enfield Southgate	105	40	65
Erith and Thamesmead	185	85	100
Feltham and Heston	170	70	100
Finchley and Golders Green	110	55	55
Greenwich and Woolwich	205	75	125
Hackney North and Stoke Newington	110	50	60
Hackney South and Shoreditch	165	85	80
Hammersmith and Fulham	125	65	60
Hampstead and Highgate	95	40	50
Harrow East	130	65	65
Harrow West	95	40	55
Hayes and Harlington	115	70	45
Hendon	140	70	70
Holborn and St. Pancras	135	65	70
Hornchurch	180	80	100
Hornsey and Wood Green	90	45	45
Ilford North	180	95	90
Ilford South	145	85	60
Islington North	150	65	85
Islington South and Finsbury	130	70	60
Kensington and Chelsea	35	15	20
Kingston and Surbiton	110	45	60
Lewisham Deptford	100	55	45
Lewisham East	130	55	75
Lewisham West	120	60	60
Leyton and Wanstead	120	55	65
Mitcham and Morden	130	60	70
North Southwark and Bermondsey	145	75	70
Old Bexley and Sidcup	130	50	80
Orpington	150	75	75
Poplar and Canning Town	210	120	90
Putney	105	50	55
Regents Park and Kensington North	145	80	70
Richmond Park	80	35	40
Romford	145	55	90
Ruislip Northwood	130	55	75
Streatham	110	60	45
Sutton and Cheam	115	55	60
Tooting	130	65	65
Tottenham	150	75	70
Twickenham	100	45	55
Upminster	200	75	125
Uxbridge	125	55	70
Vauxhall	120	55	65
Walthamstow	125	70	55
West Ham	160	90	70
Wimbledon	85	35	50

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5, totals may not sum due to founding

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

The following table contains the figures for the number of people who have an entitlement to Carers Allowance but do not receive it due to overlapping benefit rules, but receive a Carer Premium[1].

[1] The carer premium is intended to focus help on those who have limited opportunity to gain income from work because of providing care for a person with disabilities. It is awarded where the carer receives Carer's Allowance or has an underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance. The premium is paid in addition to other benefits and premiums, and where both the claimant and their partner satisfy the conditions, two carer premiums are paid.

The figures include Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) data. They include all IS (over and under 60s) and JSA(IB) cases with a carer premium but with no CA. From October 2003, Pension Credit replaced Income Support for people over 60. The Pension Credit calculation for people who are entitled to Carer's Allowance includes an additional amount equal to the carer premium in Income Support.

	Thousands
	Total
All	50.6
Under 65	24.7
65 and Over	26.0

Notes:

1. Figures are based on a 5 per cent sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands. Totals do not sum due to rounding.
3. Income-based JSA will include those receiving Income-based JSA with an underlying entitlement to Contribution-based JSA.
4. There is an equivalent premium called the Additional Amount in Pension Credit. There are no data available on this as yet.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Peter Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what powers the Child Support Agency has in making deductions from earnings orders against army personnel. [145678]

Mr. Pond: None. However, the Agency can ask Her Majesty's forces to use their discretionary powers to make deductions from the pay of Service personnel.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps are taken by the Child Support Agency to verify the financial status of a resident parent who has a new unmarried partner in cases where the non-resident parent has applied for departures in CSA maintenance. [147835]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to John Barrett, dated 26 January 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary questions about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked what steps are taken by the Child Support Agency to verify the financial status of a resident parent, who has a new unmarried partner, in cases where the non-resident parent has applied for departures in CSA maintenance.

In all cases falling under the "old scheme" where the resident parent (that is, the parent with care) is not receiving a prescribed benefit or Tax Credit, the Agency will seek to verify that parent's financial circumstances. Specifically we will ask the parent with care for evidence of their earnings and any other income, as well as their housing costs. We will do this whether or not the parent with care has a partner and whether or not the non-resident parent has applied for a departure.

It may help you to know that, under the "old scheme", if the parent with care has a partner, the Agency will ask for verification of that partner's income only if they share a child. This is because the only relevance of the partner's income is in determining whether we should make full allowance for the shared child in the parent with care's exempt income, or whether the partner can contribute to the support of the child. Under the revised Child Support scheme the Agency does not take into account the financial circumstances of the parent with care in any way.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the projected date is for moving all existing child support cases to the new computer system. [149472]

Mr. Pond: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1092W.

Disability Living Allowance

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of applicants for disability living allowance assessed by a Benefits Agency Medical Service doctor were *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful in their applications in 2003. [148450]

Maria Eagle: The numbers of DLA New Claim decisions made, which have included an Examining Medical Practitioner's Report as part of the evidence used, are set out in the following table.

January-November 2003

	Number (percentage)
Total decisions including an EMP report in the evidence used	126,760
Awards	56,780(45)
Refusals	69,980 (55)

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
Source:
100 per cent. MIS data

Figures include awards made as a result of new claims only. Figures are for January to November 2003 as December 2003 figures are not yet available.

Incapacity Benefit

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to review the requirement for persons who have *(a)* chronic mental health problems and *(b)* chronic physical conditions to undergo (i) IB50 and (ii) personal capability assessment. [149715]

Maria Eagle: The Personal Capability Assessment, which includes completion of IB50 self-assessment where relevant, is an effective method of determining a person's functional ability.

The IB50 self-assessment questionnaire has been designed to give people the opportunity to provide information about their problems, mental or physical, that they feel the decision maker should take into account in relation to functional assessment.

People with a severe mental illness are exempt from the Personal Capability Assessment, and procedures have been developed so that people who meet the exemption criteria are identified at the earliest possible stage. Any cause of incapacity which may include a mental health problem triggers a request for a report from the person's GP or medical specialist. People who are exempt are not required to complete a self-assessment IB50.

We have no plans to change these arrangements at present.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to improve access for incapacity benefit claimants to personal capability assessment tests by introducing peripatetic surgeries in rural areas. [149716]

Maria Eagle: Under the contract for provision of Medical Services, SchlumbergerSema must ensure that customers are not required to travel for more than ninety minutes by public transport, on a single journey, for an examination, unless previously agreed with the customer; SchlumbergerSema will pay all reasonable and actual expenses to customers who attend for an examination and apply for reimbursement.

Information leaflets are provided to customers, advising them to contact the Client Help desk if they expect to experience difficulties in travelling to the Medical Examination Centre. Under certain circumstances, SchlumbergerSema will authorise the refund of taxi fares if agreed in advance with the Client Help desk; domiciliary visits can also be arranged, where it is determined that a customer is unable to travel on medical grounds.

We have no plans to change these arrangements at present.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many appeal tribunal decisions on incapacity benefit appeals have been challenged by social security offices in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the rest of the United Kingdom in each of the last two years; and how many challenges were successful in each case. [148746]

Maria Eagle: Decisions of tribunals may be appealed on a point of law to Social Security Commissioners. The numbers of tribunal decisions appealed in incapacity benefit cases in the last two years are in the tables.

Tribunal decisions on incapacity benefit appealed by the Secretary of State on a point of law during 2002

	Scotland	*Elsewhere in the UK*
Decisions appealed	7	11
Successful	7	8
Unsuccessful	0	3

Tribunal decisions on incapacity benefit appealed by the Secretary of State on a point of law during 2003

	Scotland	*Elsewhere in the UK*
Decisions appealed	11	34
Successful	5	13
Unsuccessful[1]	1	6
Result awaited	5	15

[1] Figure for elsewhere in the UK includes one appeal withdrawn.
Note:
Successful appeals include decisions set aside by a tribunal chairman and those found by a Social Security Commissioner to be erroneous in law.

New Deal

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have taken part in the New Deal for Musicians in each year of the programme's existence. [147952]

Mr. Browne: The information requested is in the table.

Number of participants in New Deal of Musicians

Year	*Total in year*
1999	1,515
2000	3,484
2001	4,015
2002	2,859
2003[1]	1,590
Total	13,463

[1] Up to 28 August 2003

Source:
New Deal for Musicians Database

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* his Department and *(b)* JobCentrePlus are employed in administering the New Deal for Musicians. [147953]

Mr. Browne: There is no separate administrative resource allocated specifically to New Deal for Musicians as it is delivered as part of the wider New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have been placed in sustainable employment by the New Deal for Musicians; and what percentage that represents of the total number of people taking part in the programme. [147954]

Mr. Browne: Since November 2002 New Deal for musicians has been adopted as part of the mainstream New Deals; New Deal for young People and New Deal 25plus. The successful job outcomes of New Deal for Musicians therefore contribute to the total data of those two programmes as appropriate.

Separate statistical information on the number of New Deal for Musicians participants finding sustainable jobs is not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the annual cost is of the New Deal for Musicians *(a)* this year and *(b)* for each year of the programme's existence. [147955]

Mr. Browne: The estimated cost of the three year New Deal for Musicians national pilot was £9 million. Annual costs are not available for this period. The spend on New Deal for Musicians for 2002–03 is £3.1 million and 2003–04, to December 2003, is £2 million.

Occupational Pension Schemes

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what guidance he has issued to *(a)* the trustees and *(b)* the administrators of occupational pension schemes where, on winding-up, the remaining assets of the scheme are insufficient to cover SERPS liabilities for some members. [148977]

Malcolm Wicks: Section 74 of the Pensions Act 1995 sets out the provisions on overriding scheme rules so as to enable the trustees of a scheme to discharge their liabilities to members for pensions and other benefits even if the those pensions and benefits are not fully secured. When an occupational pension scheme is winding up, it ceases to contract-out and its trustees must secure members contracted-out rights.

The Inland Revenue manual CA15 (Cessation of Contracted-out Pension Schemes) contains guidance on securing contracted-out rights. CA15 is available via the Inland Revenue website at: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk. Inland Revenue writes to scheme administrators making them aware of the guidance once the scheme has ceased to contract-out. Also, when they are informed that a scheme is no longer contracted-out, the Inland Revenue sends form CA7992 to scheme trustees. This gives general guidelines on securing the liabilities, and the options that are available.

No guidance has been issued by the Department for Work and Pensions on this subject.

Pension Credit

Mr. Peter Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of pensioners from *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Dumfries have received pension credit since its introduction. [145684]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is given in the table based on numbers of pension credit recipients in Great Britain, Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway.

Recipients of pension credit, 31 December 2003

	Numbers of pension credit recipients	*Percentage of population aged 60 and over (percentage)*
Great Britain	2,533,960	21.1
Scotland	263,290	24.5
Dumfries and Galloway	8,615	22.5

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Percentages have been calculated using the ONS population estimates for mid 2002.
3. Figures for recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the overall sum paid to pensioners under the pension credit scheme is to date in *(a)* England, *(b)* Cambridgeshire and *(c)* Huntingdon. [149686]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested. The information that is available is as follows.

The latest departmental information suggests that between 1 October 2003 and 30 November 2003:

An estimated £688 million was spent on Pension Credit in England;

An estimated £5.0 million was spent on Pension Credit in Cambridgeshire;

An estimated £0.7 million was spent on Pension Credit in Huntingdon.

Notes:
1. Pension Credit was introduced on 6 October 2003, therefore this figure includes 5 days of expenditure on the Minimum Income Guarantee (the benefit Pension Credit replaces).
2. This figure is based on total expenditure on Pension Credit in Great Britain (GB) from the departmental Programme Accounting Computer System (PACS) data. The country, county and constituency level expenditure is estimated using 100 per cent. Generalised Matching Service (GMS) data.

3. The estimate for England has been rounded to the nearest million pounds.
4. The estimates for Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon have been rounded to the nearest £100,000.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people resident in *(a)* the constituency of Huntingdon and *(b)* Cambridgeshire have received pension credit since its introduction; [149687]

(2) how many people resident in *(a)* the constituency of Huntingdon and *(b)* Cambridgeshire have applied for pension credit since its introduction. [149688]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 December 2003 there were *(a)* 2,018 pensioner households (2,397 individuals) in the Huntingdon constituency and *(b)* 12,974 pensioner households (15,474 individuals) in Cambridgeshire receiving pension credit. Information on the number of people who have applied for pension credit is not available in respect of individual constituencies or counties.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of pensioners in the constituency of Huntingdon have received letters setting out their rights under the pension credit scheme. [149689]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of people in individual constituencies who have received a letter about pension credit is not available.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people have claimed pension credit in Brent, East since it was introduced; [149908]

(2) how many people are entitled to claim pension credit in Brent, East. [149909]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 December 2003 there were 3,205 pensioner households (3,786 individuals) in the Brent, East constituency receiving pension credit. Information on the number of people who have applied for or are eligible for pension credit is not available in respect of individual constituencies. However, we estimate that approximately 450,000 pensioner households in the London region are eligible for pension credit.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of working age people contributing to a non-state pension scheme. [150452]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of working age people currently contributing to a non-state pension scheme is 11.7 million.

The percentage of working age people currently contributing to a non-state pension scheme is 36 per cent.

Source:
Family Resources Survey 2002–03.

Notes:
1. Those who are 'contributing' are members of a non-state pension schemes who are themselves currently contributing to the scheme.
2. All figures are estimates and are taken from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). 2002–03 is the latest year for which data is available. The coverage of the Survey is the UK.
3. Non-state pension refers to either an occupational pension or personal pension
4. Stakeholder pensions are included as personal pensions in the estimates.
5. Working age has been defined as 20–59 for women and 20–64 for men.
6. Some individuals may contribute to both an occupational and a personal pension scheme but there are no overlaps. The figures include those contributing to either an occupational pension or a personal pension.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of working age people accumulating rights in a non-state pension scheme. [150453]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of working age people who are currently accumulating rights to a non-state pension scheme is 14.5 million

The percentage of working age people who are currently accumulating rights to a non-state pension scheme is 44 per cent.

Source:
Family Resources Survey 2002–03.

Notes:
1. Those 'accumulating rights' includes those who are members of a non-state pension with either themselves or their employer currently contributing. The figures do not include 'deferred' pension rights as neither themselves nor their employer are currently contributing.
2. All figures are estimates and are taken from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). 2002–03 is the latest year for which data is available. The coverage of the Survey is the UK.
3. Non-state pension refers to either an occupational pension or personal pension
4. Stakeholder pensions are included as personal pensions in the estimates.
5. Working age has been defined as 20–59 for women and 20–64 for men.
6. Some individuals may contribute to both an occupational and a personal pension scheme but there are no overlaps. The figures include those contributing to either an occupational pension or a personal pension.

Post Office Card Accounts

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what arrangements he has made for wheelchair users who cannot use their hands to collect benefits and pensions at post offices when using the new PIN card system. [150786]

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what arrangements his Department has made to help partially sighted clients with post office card accounts, who have difficulty in using a PIN number, but do not wish to nominate another person to collect their money for them, to obtain their payments from the post office branch. [150998]

Mr. Pond: Our information campaign has an important role to play in the way we take customers through the changes, including collecting their money from their account at the post office if they wish. Customers will be supplied with information, which clearly sets out their 'account options' and enables them to freely choose the best account to suit their circumstances.

For some people, a card-based account may not be the most suitable option and they may prefer to use an account with a cheque book or building society pass book. If post office access is a priority, people in these circumstances can choose one of the accounts that are accessible at post office branches.

The Post Office is working to ensure its services are as accessible to as many customers as possible and is planning to make adjustments to the PIN pads installed in Post Office branches.

We have always recognised that there will be some people, such as those who cannot open or manage any sort of account that we cannot pay by Direct Payment. In consultation with a range of bodies representing those affected, we are developing an exceptions method of payment to meet the needs of people in these circumstances, which will be accessible at Post Office branches.

Retirement Pension

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claims are outstanding or not fully resolved relating to *(a)* the retirement pension assessment of widows and widowers, *(b)* the retirement pension assessment of those who have experienced divorce and *(c)* change of circumstances in retirement pension assessments for those already of pensionable age for (i) the most recently available month and (ii) each same month in the three previous years. [149635]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the table.

Number of outstanding claims or not fully resolved

	December 2003	*December 2002*	*December 2001*	*December 2000*
(a) the RP assessment of widows and widowers	5,702	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
(b) the RP assessment of those who have experienced divorce	10,240	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Total	15,942	10,604	4,457	3,831
(c) change of circumstance in RP assessments for those already pension age (bereaved customers)	20,293	4,782	[1]—	1,825

[1] Not available

Notes:

1. Prior to December 2003 *(a)* and *(b)* RP claims were counted together.
2. Figures relating to *(c)* refer to a change in entitlement for a surviving spouse when one or both in a couple are in receipt of RP and one of the couple dies. We have no figures available for *(c)* in relation to Dec 2001 due to changes in organisational structure. NPC deals with other changes of circumstance to RP eg increases in RP due to a change in the customer's contribution record. These changes of circumstance are not included in the figures stated against *(c)* in the table.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many retired pensioners are using *(a)* post offices, *(b)* banks and *(c)* building societies to receive their pension in the Easington constituency. [148853]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested.

However from information available as at 29 November 2003, in the Easington parliamentary constituency, the number of pensioners (women aged 60 and over, men aged 65 and over) who receive their state pension is given in the following table by type of method of payment.

	Number
Total paid at a post office, by either order book or post office card account	9,038
Paid direct to a bank or building society account (some of which can be accessed at post office branches)	3,685
Total number of state pensioners	12,723

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

Information available does not differentiate between bank and building society account for payments direct to accounts. No information is held as to the number of pensioners who receive payments direct to a normal or basic bank or building society accounts who then collect all or part of their pension at the Post Office.

The data exclude state pension recipients who receive state pension combined with another benefit and are paid through another benefit system.

Sema Group

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department has made of the performance of the Sema Group in its contracts to operate the Benefits Agency Medical Service. [148497]

Maria Eagle: The Department undertook a major review of the contract in 2001 as a basis for negotiating new and more stretching service level targets for the extension of the existing contract to 2005; the revised targets reflected recommendations for improvements made by the Social Security Select Committee and the Public Accounts Committee.

There are more than 60 targets against which Medical Service's performance is measured, including targets for speed, accuracy and quality; achievement of these targets is reviewed on a monthly basis, with the vast majority being regularly met. For example, in respect of incapacity benefit examinations, the actual average clearance times target of 32 working days (from the receipt of the referral for examination from the DWP to the return of the case to the DWP) has consistently been met, with a year to date performance of 29.5 working days.

The latest report published by the National Audit Office on 17 October 2003 recognised that there has been good progress, and significant improvements to the contracted services.

TREASURY

Bank of England

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the Governor of the Bank of England. [151064]

Ruth Kelly: Ministers and civil servants have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals as part of the process of policy development and analysis. As with previous Administrations it is not this Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code, the Civil Service Code and Guidance for Civil Servants: Contacts with Lobbyists, as appropriate.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150274]

Ruth Kelly: The current space occupied by civil servants of the Treasury, the Inland Revenue and the Customs and Excise in *(a)* central London is 202,453 sq m and in *(b)* Greater London is 28,017 sq m.

Complaints

Rob Marris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of complaints to *(a)* the Inland Revenue, *(b)* HM Customs and Excise and *(c)* district valuers' offices receive a substantive response within 30 working days. [146853]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise and the Valuation Office do not capture information about substantive responses within 30 working days.

In the nine months ended 31 December 2003, the Inland Revenue provided a substantive response to 76 per cent. of complaints within 15 working days. In the same period, the Valuation Office provided a response to 74 per cent. of complaints within 20 working days. For the six months ended 30 September 2003, Customs and Excise provided a substantive response to 84 per cent. of complaints within 10 working days.

Compliance Performance Targets

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 868–69W, on taxation adjustment, whether performance related pay has been paid as a consequence of adjustments in *(a)* the whole and *(b)* part of the Large Business Office's Compliance performance in the years 1999–2000 to 2001–02. [151095]

Dawn Primarolo: Performance assessment is not linked to nor based on the individual's contribution to yield or taxation adjustments achieved. No performance related pay was paid in consequence of the Large Business Office's performance yield figures reported above.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what compliance performance targets were set for the *(a)* Large Business Office (CT) and *(b)* Inland Revenue in each of the years 1998–99 to 2002–03; and on what dates these targets were set. [151096]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is as follows:

(a) Large Business Office (LBO) compliance performance targets for 2002–03 are set out in the LBO Annual report for the year ended 31 March 2003. For 1998–99 to 2001–02 they are set out in the Board's Annual Reports for these years. These targets are agreed in January/February before the start of each financial year.

(b) National Inland Revenue compliance performance targets for 1998–99 to 2002–03 are set out in the Board's Annual Reports for these years. These targets are agreed as part of the annual planning round.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter to him dated 16 October 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. J. Miah. [151236]

Dawn Primarolo: Following confirmation that the letter referred to was dated 18 December, I have replied to my right hon. Friend.

Financial Services

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on financial services. [151508]

Ruth Kelly: As I set out in my written statement on 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1, Lord Penrose delivered the report of his inquiry into Equitable Life to the Treasury on 23 December.

I can report that Lord Penrose has also made his report available to the Serious Fraud Office; and having studied the contents of the report the Treasury has asked the Serious Fraud Office to consider a number of issues raised in the report.

As I set out in my statement of 5 January, the Treasury intends to publish the report in full as soon as possible. I will keep the House fully informed.

I can also confirm that, purely for the purpose of informing the Government's response on specific items of policy, relevant extracts of the report have been shown to named officials of the DTI.

Green Minister

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what work his Department's Green Minister has undertaken in the last three months. [150874]

John Healey: As the Treasury's Green Minister, I am committed to 'greening' the Department's operations, to integrating environmental considerations across policy areas, and to improving the economic analysis underpinning the Government's environmental initiatives.

In the last three months, as the Treasury's Green Minister my work has included membership of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Green Ministers and the Sustainable Development Taskforce, and meetings with representatives of non-governmental organisations and other key stakeholders on topics ranging from climate change to waste to aviation.

I have written to senior officials responsible for sustainable development in each of the Chancellor's Departments and agencies to stress the importance attached to ensuring that appropriate priority and commitment are given to meeting the Government's sustainable development objectives and targets, and I led a meeting of the Working Group of responsible officials from across each of these Departments and agencies in October.

In addition, the development of a range of environmental policy measures, including those announced in the pre-Budget report (PBR) on 10 December 2003 (Cm 6042), is my responsibility. The measures contributing to the Government's sustainable development strategy set out in PBR 2003 include:

announcing plans for changes to the eligibility criteria for climate change agreements that will provide better incentives for businesses to encourage energy efficiency and scope to extend the sectors eligible;

the extension, subject to state aid approval, of relief from levy for aggregates used in processed products and virgin aggregate in Northern Ireland;

a proposed framework for alternative fuels including a commitment to providing three year certainty on duty differentials for all alternative fuels;

a gradual increase in the duty rate for LPG to a level which better reflects its relative environmental benefits;

recycling landfill tax revenues to businesses; and

a consultation in early 2004 on tackling diffuse water pollution, including a consideration of the pros and cons of economic instruments.

As I confirmed in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Rothwell (Mr. Challen) on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 408, all Government Departments will be required to consider sustainable development as part of the 2004 spending review process, as they were in 2002.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the extent to which information technology procurement has improved as a result of the Gateway review process. [150927]

Mr. Boateng: Quantitative assessment of the Gateway process is provided to OGC's Supervisory Board three times yearly. In addition, the National Audit Office are currently compiling details of the value for money benefits to projects of the OGC Gateway review process.

This assessment shows that use of the OGC Gateway process leads to a significant improvement in likelihood of success for all procurement projects and programmes—including IT-enabled—and this improvement is particularly marked where the process is applied to projects or programmes in their early stages.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what section of the Inland Revenue is responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the Inland Revenue in relation to people with disabilities. [150411]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue co-ordinates its activities in relation to people with disabilities through two sections: services for taxpayers with disabilities are co-ordinated by a team in Service Delivery; the Human Resources section co-ordinates activities and services relating to the employment of people with disabilities. The Inland Revenue also has a full time specialist disability adviser who supports both areas and works with external disability organisations.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to appoint a disabilities champion to take responsibility for the Inland Revenue's service delivery to people with disabilities. [150412]

Dawn Primarolo: A member of the Board of the Commissioner of the Inland Revenue has already been appointed as a consumer champion and as such covers a wide range of service delivery areas, including service to people with disabilities.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received in relation to the definition of an incapacitated person used in tax and VAT legislation; and if he will make a statement. [150413]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have received a number of representations on a wide variety of subjects, including a report from the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group on disability and the tax system, which included representations on this specific issue.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures are taken by the Inland Revenue to advertise home visits for those with disabilities *(a)* in leaflets and *(b)* on the Inland Revenue website. [150414]

Dawn Primarolo: Inland Revenue are currently developing a strategy to promote their home visits arrangements to the target groups that will include information on the internet and in leaflets.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Inland Revenue has a disabilities helpline; and if he will make a statement. [150416]

Dawn Primarolo: At present the Inland Revenue has no plans to establish a disabilities helpline. Advisers in our telephone contact centres are trained to deal with telephone calls from the full range of our taxpayers. We believe that this approach provides the flexibility to respond to the differing requirements of our taxpayers base.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether all Inland Revenue offices have textphone or similar communication aids. [150418]

Dawn Primarolo: All Inland Revenue Enquiry Offices are registered with the BTTypetalk service.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what equipment is available in Inland Revenue offices open to the public for those with hearing difficulties. [150419]

Dawn Primarolo: When last audited in early 2002, out of a total of 323 of Inland Revenue Enquiry Offices providing a face to face service, 86 per cent. had portable loop systems and 27 per cent. of them had fixed induction loop systems. We are in the process of carrying out another audit.

In spring 2003 Inland Revenue introduced a set of national standards for their Enquiry Offices specifying that they be equipped with a fixed and portable induction loop system, and a crystal listening device. They are progressing to all of their Enquiry Centres meeting this standard.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what training is given to frontline Inland Revenue staff in dealing with people with disabilities. [150422]

Dawn Primarolo: All new members of staff receive disability awareness material as part of the Inland Revenue's induction process.

During the last three years over 90 per cent. of staff have received diversity awareness training which includes disability related issues.

In addition, individual staff are nominated for training courses according to the requirements of their role and 22,752 staff have attended a training course specifically covering disability issues over the last three years.

Inward Migration

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress in establishing an appropriate method for measuring net migration into the UK. [150333]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Claire Curtis-Thomas, dated 26 January 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your request for a statement on progress in establishing an appropriate method for measuring net migration into the UK. (150333)

A substantial amount of work in this area has already been completed, and a program of further work is ongoing.

The results of the 2001 Census showed that the mid-year population estimates had over-estimated the population of the UK over the previous decade. Subsequent research showed that this was partly because net migration into the country had been over-estimated. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) made several improvements to the methodology for estimating total international migration, making fuller use of the available sources. The improved methodology was used to produce the international migration estimates for 2001, and was also applied retrospectively from 1992 onwards in order to produce revised total international migration estimates for the inter-censual decade. ONS released final revised international migration estimates for 1992–2001 in June 2003. The revised methodology was used again to produce the 2002 international migration estimates published in November 2003, which are available on the National Statistics website at the following address: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/inme1103.pdf

It was already recognised that international migration is the hardest component of population change to measure before the results of the 2001 Census were published. A National Statistics Quality Review of international migration statistics was initiated in March 2002. This was aimed at identifying the means of making the required improvements to the reliability and comprehensiveness of international migration statistics. The National Statistics Quality Review report was published on the National Statistics website in September 2003. Following the publication of this report, ONS produced an implementation plan for taking forward the review's recommendations. This was published on the National Statistics website in January 2004. Both the review and the implementation plan are available at the following address: http://www.statistlcs.gov.uk/methods_quality/quality_review/population.asp

The work outlined in the implementation plan is already underway. ONS, in conjunction with the Home Office are working to complete some of the actions identified by the end of 2004. Other actions are suitable for longer term planning, and in some cases are dependent on developments in other government departments for their successful completion.

Lamfalussy Committee of Banking Supervisors

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the announcement on 20 January about the new Lamfalussy committee of banking supervisors. [151509]

Mr. Gordon Brown: I am delighted to inform the House that on 20 January EU Finance Ministers agreed to base the new Lamfalussy committee of banking supervisors ('CEBS') in London. The equivalent committee for securities supervisors ('CESR') will continue to be based in Paris and that for insurance ('CEIOPS') will be based in Frankfurt. The location of these regulatory committees in Europe's major financial centres is a good outcome for the UK and for financial markets in the EU. This high-level committee of EU banking supervisors and central banks will be a key forum for national authorities to improve supervisory practices and advance the EU's legislative agenda. It should help ensure that more flexible EU legislation is adopted quicker, with improved consultation, transparency, and greater input from market practitioners. This should help drive forward the EU Financial Services Action Plan, providing Europe with a more dynamic, innovative, efficient and competitive financial services sector, to the benefit of consumers and businesses. The banking committee will meet at least three times a year, and should meet in London for the first time in the spring. It has already assumed its responsibilities and is currentiy looking to secure permanent offices in London. The committee is currently chaired by Jose Maria Roldan, Director General of the Bank of Spain, and around forty senior regulators and central bankers will participate in its meetings.

National Insurance

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the additional revenue to the Exchequer that would be generated by increasing the rate of Class 4 National Insurance contributions by 3 per cent. [150459]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the publication "Tax ready reckoner and tax reliefs, December 2003" which is available in the Library of the House and also on the Treasury website (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.Uk/media//AAB24/pbr03_trr.pdf). The figures exclude any estimate of behavioural response to the tax change.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who the members of National Savings and Investments were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151308]

Ruth Kelly: As of 1 January 2004, National Savings and Investments have six Executive Directors and four Non Executive Directors:

Name	*Term of office*	*Salary*[1] (£000)	*Bonus*[1] (£000)
Alan Cook—Chief Executive	5 years	145–150	10–15
Trevor Bayley—Finance Director	5 years	115–120	10–15
Steve Owen—Partnerships and Operations Director	Permanent	85–90	10–15
Gill Cattanach—Commercial Director	Permanent	90–95	10–15
Sandra Postles—HP Director	Permanent	75–80	10–15
John Prout—Sales Director	Permanent	95–100	10–15
Richard Wright—Non Executive Director and Chair of the Board	3 years	15–20	0
Marie Stafford—Non Executive Director	3 years	10–15	0
Paul Spencer—Non Executive Director	3 years	10–15	0
Michael Medlicott—Non Executive Director	3 years	10–15	0

[1] As banded in our Annual Report and Accounts.

Public Service Contracts

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in the inquiry led by Mr. Alan Wood into the awarding of public service contracts in the EU; whether its remit includes awarding train franchises; and when he expects the inquiry to report. [150992]

Mr. Boateng: The Review was announced in the pre-Budget report on 10 December 2003. Work has now commenced and Mr. Wood will report in Summer 2004.

The Review's scope is all sectors covered by the EC Directives on public procurement in the fields of Services, Supplies and Works[1].

[1] 92/50/EEC, 93/36/EEC, 93/37/EEC.

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) his Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months, including the Inland Revenue and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. [147982]

Ruth Kelly: The number of passes reported lost or stolen between 1 January and 31 December 2003 by staff and contractors in HM Treasury and departmental agencies can be found in the following table:

Department	*Lost*	*Stolen*	*Total*
HM Treasury	125	3	128
HM Customs and Excise[1]	26	15	41
Debt Management Office	11	0	11
The Government Actuary's Department	8	0	8
Inland Revenue	n/a	n/a	n/a
National Savings and Investments	13	4	17
Office of Government Commerce	14	3	17
OGC Buying Solutions	0	0	0
Office of National Statistics	101	0	101
Royal Mint[2]	n/a	n/a	11
Valuation Office Agency	73	4	77

[1] HM Customs and Excise figures cover their offices nationwide, but some losses and thefts may have been dealt with locally, and not reported to Head Office.

[2] Royal Mint do not keep separate records for losses and thefts.

Passes are invalidated as soon as they reported missing, so they cannot be used if found. The passes do not contain information identifying them to their respective building or organisation. Staff are regularly reminded of the importance of keeping their security pass safe, through the induction programmes and security awareness publicity.

Sport, Health and Fitness

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the benefit to the UK economy of *(a)* professional and *(b)* amateur sports in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003; [149948]

(2) what assessment he has made of the benefit to the UK economy of the health and fitness sector in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [149949]

Mr. Caborn: I have been asked to reply.

In June 2003, Sport England published the report, "The Value of the Sports Economy in England", which presented a summary of the value of the sports economy to the economy in England. The data in the report relates to 2000, the last year for which comprehensive data is available. The report found that sport generated more than £9.8 billion in value added to the economy in England, approximately 1.5 per cent. of total gross value added (GVA) for England. The breakdown according to sector is as follows:

	Value added (£ million)
Commercial sport	3,553
Of which:	
Spectator sports	709
Participation sports	380
Retailing	966
Sport-related manufacturing	840

	Value added (£ million)
Commercial non-sport	4,226
Of which:	
Higher education establishments	422
Voluntary sector	1,215
Local Government	844
Total	9,838

Sports Clubs

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the financial benefit to amateur sports of setting the thresholds at which community clubs are exempt from corporation tax at £50,000; [149951]

(2) what estimate he has made of the financial benefit to amateur sports of mandatory rate relief at 80 per cent. for registered community amateur sports clubs. [149950]

John Healey: The doubling of the corporation tax exemption thresholds for community amateur sports clubs will remove the requirement to complete an annual tax return for eligible clubs enabling them to concentrate on the development of their clubs. The financial benefit to amateur sport clubs will depend on the financial circumstances of each club.

The financial benefits of mandatory rates relief for registered community amateur sports clubs will depend upon the size and structure of each club and whether it previously received discretionary rates relief from its local authority.

Standard Life

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations his Department has received from policy holders regarding the future of Standard Life. [149728]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire (Mrs. Lawrence) on 13 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 634–35W. The Financial Services Authority has regulatory responsibility for Standard Life. I understand that no Standard Life policy holders have made representations to the Treasury concerning the future of Standard Life.

Tax Collection

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are employed by the Inland Revenue to administer the collection of unpaid tax. [R] [149809]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Receivables Management Service is responsible for the collection of unpaid tax and national insurance. As at 1 January 2004 the Receivables Management Service had 5,800 staff directly employed in collection of tax and national insurance.

Tax Credits

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a copy of the most recent standard mailing issued to all tax credits recipients by the Inland Revenue. [148967]

Dawn Primarolo: A copy of the most recent general mailing to tax credits recipients, the first issue of Tax Credits Update, has been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the child elements of Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support will transfer to Child Tax Credit payments; and whether modifications to the new tax credits IT system will be needed to facilitate the transfer. [150532]

Dawn Primarolo: I will make a statement shortly on our plans for bringing IS/JSA claimants with children into the Child Tax Credit.

Teenage Pregnancies (Yorkshire)

David Davis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the number of teenage pregnancies has been in (i) Haltemprice and Howden and (ii) East Riding of Yorkshire in each of the last five years. [149669]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Davis dated 26 January 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question on what the number of teenage pregnancies has been in (i) Haltemprice and Howden and (ii) East Riding of Yorkshire in each of the last five years. (149669)

To protect the confidentiality of individuals, figures for Haltemprice and Howden parliamentary constituency cannot be released as this might reveal small numbers of cases in individual wards.

The number of teenage pregnancies for East Riding of Yorkshire UA for 1997 to 2001 (the latest year for which figures are available), are shown in the table below.

In the answer provided, teenagers are interpreted as those under 18 at the time of conception, because the target set by The Government Strategy on Teenage Pregnancy is for this age-group.

	East Riding of Yorkshire
1997	195
1998	196
1999	167
2000	174
2001 (Provisional)	173

Wales

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money is being awarded to Wales above the Barnett block to cover the costs of Objective One projects in 2003–04. [150654]

Mr. Boateng: The additional funding was set out in the 2002 Spending Review: New Public Spending Plans, 2003–2006 (Cm 5570).

VAT

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment his Department has made of the change in unreclaimable tax for small businesses following the recent increase in the starting threshold for VAT; [149767]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the impact on unreclaimable costs for small businesses of the recent increase in the starting threshold for VAT. [149768]

John Healey: With the increase in the VAT threshold to £56,000 at Budget 2003, 2,000 small businesses were removed from compulsory VAT registration. Businesses who wish to continue to be VAT registered may, of course, continue to do so voluntarily.

There is therefore no impact on unreclaimable costs for small businesses.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Assistance Funding (Tower Hamlets)

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding will be available to fund organisations helping parents in Tower Hamlets in the next 12 months; and what proportion of funding will be allocated to *(a)* national organisations and *(b)* local organisations. [146232]

Margaret Hodge: Funding in the next financial year—to support parents both nationally and locally—will be available from a number of sources within my department. Our best estimates of the funding options available in Tower Hamlets are as follows:

In the financial year 2004/05 £331,909 is available in Tower Hamlets for groups to apply to the Local Network Fund for Children and Young People.

The Local Network Fund (LNF) provides community groups with small grants to support local projects and activities for 0 to 19-year-olds experiencing disadvantage and social exclusion. The fund enables local people to identify solutions to local issues affecting children and young people through grants ranging between £250 and £7,000 to community groups under four themes: Aspirations and experience; Economic disadvantage; Isolation and access; and Children's voices. Groups whose activities support parenting, involve or target parents, providing there is a clear outcome for children and young people are eligible to apply for a Local Network Fund grant.

Decisions on allocating funding are made by assessment panels comprising local people with knowledge of issues faced by children and young people in the communities served by the funds.

Funding for Sure Start local programmes and children's centres in Tower Hamlets over the next financial year is as follows:

Programme name	*Revenue funding 2004/05 (£)*
Ocean Estate	764,650
Chrisp Street and Teviot	761,063
Weavers	768,750
Around Poplar	750,000
Shadwell	750,000
St. Peter's and Redcoats	750,000
Bromley to Burdett	680,000

In addition each local programme has been allocated a capital grant of just over £1 million bringing the total capital investment to £7.7 million.

For children's centres Tower Hamlets has been given indicative funding to March 2006. Revenue funding is £1,621,304 and capital funding is £4,472,384. The local authority is now planning their proposed profile of spend between now and March 2006.

In the financial year 2004/05, £75,000 is available to Tower Hamlets from the Sure Start Plus pilot programme to provide personal support and advice for teenagers who discover that they are pregnant, so that they can make responsible and well-informed decisions according to their individual circumstances.

In the financial year 2004/05, approximately £35,000 from all Tower Hamlets Sure Start local programmes will provide a teenage pregnancy midwifery lead for teenage parents offering one-to-one case worker support, running teenage parent ante-natal classes and developing working protocols for maternity services in supporting this group.

Tower Hamlets received a Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation Grant of £25,258 to enable adjustments to George Greens Children's Centre to support teenage parents with babies in returning to education, training and employment and support positive parenting.

Tower Hamlets Children's Fund spent £200,649 on services delivering parental education during July to September 2003. Further funding will be available in 2004–05 to enable the Children's Fund to continue to deliver preventative services for children, young people and their families.

Tower Hamlets also has an allocation of over £62 million for children's social services in 2004–05 through the local government finance settlement, some of which may be available to support organisations helping parents.

Projects in Tower Hamlets may also benefit from national programmes such as the Family Support Grant and Parenting Fund. Parents in all parts of England are able to use Parentline Plus's helpline which receives core funding from the Family Support Grant.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what powers social services departments will have to assist children and families from whom welfare benefits are withdrawn under clause 7 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Bill. [143800]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 15 December 2004]*: Local authorities may exercise any of their Children Act 1989 powers and duties to assist the children of such families. They may use section 20 to accommodate the children or section 17 to provide other support. They may not use section 17 to assist any adult member of the family unless it is to prevent a breach of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR).

Carer Breaks

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance he has issued to local authorities regarding the provision of short breaks for families caring for children with severe learning disabilities. [146484]

Margaret Hodge: "Guidance and Regulations Volume 6 Children with Disabilities" was issued following the Children Act 1989. The guidance clearly sets out local councils' responsibilities for the provision of short-term or respite care.

In August 1995 LAC(95)14 "Respite Care: Services Short-Term Placements of Children" was issued setting out Regulations where services of pre-planned short-term placements could be treated as a single placement.

In previous circulars issued under the Quality Protects Programme, short breaks were identified as a priority area for the Children's Services Grant.

More recently, Guidance was issued to accompany the Carers Grant 2004/05 setting out the Grant's objective to encourage councils to provide breaks services for disabled children and their families.

Child Care Strategy

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* new places have been created and *(b)* children have been helped under the National Child Care Strategy in the London boroughs of (i) Redbridge and (ii) Waltham Forest since April 1999; what the current year's Childcare Grant is; what is proposed for the next financial year; and if he will make a statement. [147394]

Margaret Hodge: 1,990 new child care places were created in the London borough of Redbridge between April 1999 and June 2003, helping some 3,700 children. Net of places closing, this added 1,423 places to the stock of child care places in the borough. Grant of £764,400 is available to Redbridge in financial year 2003–04 to support the creation of new places. Grant allocations for 2004–06 are not split between the two financial years. For the two financial years together, £2,185,200 is available to Redbridge, including £1.1 million capital funding to create children's centres.

3,037 new child care places were created in the London borough of Waltham Forest between April 1999 and June 2003, helping some 5,600 children. Net of places closing, this added 2,936 places to the stock of child care places. Grant of £988,800 is available in financial year 2003–04 to support the creation of new places. For the two financial years 2004–06, £4,780,200 is available to Waltham Forest, including £3.1 million capital funding to create children's centres.

Child Poverty

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average cost was in 2002–03 of raising a child to the age of 18. [145661]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Research on expenditure on children is made complicated by the difficulty of separately identifying child and non-child expenditure within family expenditure and the issue of children sharing in the wealth of their parents. There is no consensus on the factors to be included in estimating the cost of raising a child.

Academic and business research on this question highlights the complexities involved and has resulted in a large range of estimates. For example, a study commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1997 suggested a cost of around £50,000 for 'regular' support up to the age of 17. Recent research by the Centre for Economics and Business Research for the Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society suggested a much higher average cost of £140,000, which includes spending on both 'necessities' and 'luxuries'. Such results are of course not directly comparable due to the differences in the factors included and the methodology used.

Notes:

1. Sue Middleton, Karl Ashworth and Ian Braithwaite (1997) "Small Fortunes: spending on children, childhood poverty and parental sacrifice" Joseph Rowntree Foundation
2. Centre for Economics and Business Research (2003)http://www.liverpoolvictoria.co.uk/press/stories/child savings.htm

Child Protection

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children resident in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon were on the Child Protection Register on 31 December 2003. [149673]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of children and young people on the Child Protection Register in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon at 31 December 2003 is not collected centrally for this date. However, information about children who are registered on child protection registers is collected centrally from local councils with social services responsibilities at 31 March each year. The most recent figure, which was for 31 March 2002, shows that there were 100 children on the register maintained by Cambridgeshire county council. Information is not collected below this organisational level.

Details of the number of children and young people on Child Protection Registers at 31 March 2003 will be published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on Thursday 29 January 2004.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children resident in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon who were on the Child Protection Register on 31 December 2003 had previously been registered. [149674]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of children and young people on the Child Protection Register in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon at 31 December 2003 is not collected centrally for this date. However, information about children who are registered on child protection registers is collected centrally from local councils with social services responsibilities at 31 March each year. The most recent figure, which was for 31 March 2002, shows that there were 30 children on the Child Protection Register maintained by Cambridgeshire county council who had previously been registered. Information is not collected below this organisational level.

Details of the number of children and young people on Child Protection Register at 31 March 2003, including details of re-registrations, will be published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on Thursday 29 January 2004.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children resident in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon who were on the Child Protection Register on 31 December 2003 were also looked after by local authorities. [149675]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of children and young people on the Child Protection Register in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon at 31 December 2003 is not collected centrally for this specific date. However, information about children who are registered on child protection registers is collected centrally from local councils with social services responsibilities at 31 March each year. The most recent figure, which was for 31 March 2002, shows that there were 15 children on the Child Protection Register maintained by Cambridgeshire county council who were also looked after by local authorities on that date. Information is not collected below this organisational level.

Details of the number of children and young people on Child Protection Register at 31 March 2003, including details of those also looked after on that date, will be published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on Thursday 29 January 2004.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children resident in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon who were removed from the Child Protection Register during 2003 had been on it for more than two years. [149676]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of children and young people on the Child Protection Register in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon at 31 December 2003 is not collected centrally for this date. However, information about children who are registered on child protection registers is collected centrally from local councils with social services responsibilities at 31 March each year. The most recent figure, which was for 31 March 2002, shows that 15 children were removed from the Child Protection Register maintained by Cambridgeshire county council who had been registered for more than two years. Information is not collected below this organisational level.

Details of the number of children and young people on child protection registers at 31 March 2003, including details of de-registrations, will be published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on Thursday 29 January 2004.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for how many quangos dealing with child protection issues his Department is responsible. [145664]

Margaret Hodge: None of the non-departmental public bodies for which the Department for Education and Skills is responsible has direct responsibility for child protection issues.

On 12 January responsibility for the Children and Family Court Advice and Support Service (CAFCASS) was transferred from the Lord Chancellor to the Secretary of State for Education. CAFCASS is not directly responsible for child protection but part of its role is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children involved in family court proceedings.

Disabled Children

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what response his Department will make to the recommendations in the latest report from the National Working Group on Child Protection and Disability; [146292]

(2) what his response is to the recommendations in the latest report from the National Working Group on Child Protection and Disability; [146301]

(3) what measures are in place to protect disabled children from abuse; and if he will make a statement. [146296]

Margaret Hodge: We welcome the publication of the NSPCC report, "It doesn't happen to disabled children"—child protection and disabled children. We will consider the recommendations contained in the report carefully.

We recognise the particular vulnerability of disabled children to abuse, which increases when, as a result of their disability, children are unable to communicate abuse. That is why Government guidance on safeguarding children, including Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999) and Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need Practice Guidance (2000), highlights the need to promote a high level of awareness of this increased vulnerability and sets out measures that should be taken to strengthen the capacity of disabled children and their families to communicate abuse.

Both the measures outlined in the Green Paper and the forthcoming National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services will address the issue of safeguarding all children, including disabled children.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what research has been conducted on the effectiveness of the child protection system in addressing abuse of disabled children; what the findings were; and what further research is planned; [146293]

(2) what research has been conducted on the reasons for the higher incidence of abuse and neglect of disabled children compared to non-disabled children. [146297]

Margaret Hodge: The Department for Education and Skills has not commissioned research in this area.

We recognise that there is a need to improve the research base in respect of safeguards for disabled children. We will consider the best way to take this forward.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the role of support services is in preventing abuse of disabled children. [146294]

Margaret Hodge: Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 sets out the duties of local authorities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in need, including disabled children. Services for disabled children and their families are provided through local authorities, the health service and the voluntary sector. These services help to support families safeguard children and improve their life chances. Support services include short term breaks; day care; home help; domiciliary care; nursing and medical support; social events and outings for parents and children, as well as advice, guidance and counselling. In cases where there are concerns about possible abuse and neglect of disabled children, support services should work closely with local child protection services to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to safeguard the child.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what representations have been received from disabled children and adults in preventing abuse; and what action has been taken as a result; [146295]

(2) if he will assess the child protection system in respect of disabled children; [146298]

(3) what *(a)* the national and *(b)* local mechanisms are in place for monitoring and reviewing child protection policies, procedures and practices relating to disabled children; and if he will make a statement. [146299]

Margaret Hodge: We have not had specific representations about abuse of disabled adults. However, the Department of Health liaises closely with a number of organisations who represent vulnerable adults and the Government is aware of their concerns in this area.

The abuse of vulnerable adults is of great concern to the Government. We have already instigated a range of general measures, such as the National Service Framework for Older People and National Minimum Standards for particular aspects of service provision, to raise the standards of care of older people and other vulnerable adults. It has implemented specific measures to tackle abuse, principally "No Secrets" guidance, which councils, the NHS and police forces have used to establish and strengthen their local procedures for preventing and tackling abuse. By June 2004, we intend to introduce the Protection of Vulnerable Adults list, which in practice will amount to a workforce ban on those who have abused or mistreated vulnerable adults in their care.

The Department for Education and Skills regularly receives correspondence from parents and voluntary groups about issues affecting disabled children including child protection. This has included reports from the NSPCC, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and the National Working Group on Child Protection and Disability, which have influenced policy development. In particular, recent representations from the NSPCC were taken into account by the Disabled Children's External Working Group developing standards as part of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services which will be published later this year.

The Joint Chief Inspectors' Report Safeguarding Children, published in October 2002, contained a recommendation that all relevant Inspectorates should ensure that, prior to the next report, appropriate inspection activity had been undertaken on children with disabilities.

Safeguarding Children asked Chief Inspectors to consider whether there was a need to supplement the planned programme of inspections in any way. In planning for the next children's safeguards review, the Inspectorates have identified that additional acitivity is required in relation to children with disabilities and special needs and are developing plans to enhance their programmes in this area.

Local mechanisms for safeguarding disabled children are set out in chapter six of the Government's child protection guidance, "Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999)".

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what resources are available to promote the safeguarding of disabled children. [146300]

Margaret Hodge: It is for local councils to decide the level of resources they allocate to the safeguarding of disabled children in their area.

Overall the local government settlement has increased resources for Children's Social Services from almost £3.7 billion in 2003–04 to just over £4.0 billion in 2004–05. This provides for an increase in total resources of some 8.7 per cent. overall.

Every council will be receiving additional resources provided for Children's Social Services as a result of the Government's decision to provide an additional £100 million. £90 million for every council for safeguarding children, enabling councils to respond to the recommendations contained in the Victoria Climbie Inquiry Report and the Joint Chief Inspectors' report "Safeguarding Children".

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in what ways the forthcoming National Service Framework will contribute to the safeguarding of disabled children's needs. [146302]

Margaret Hodge: The NSF for Children, Young People and Maternity Services will address a number of cross cutting areas including the safeguarding of children. The External Working Group for Disabled Children has looked at child protection and has made a number of recommendations. These, alongside other recommendations are currently being considered before the final NSF is published later this year.

Children (Right of Contact)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues regarding an automatic assumption of equal right of contact by parents to children who are subject to marital break-up. [149757]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* I have regular meetings with my ministerial colleagues on the issue of child contact. In particular, I work closely with Lord Filkin, the Minister at the Department for Constitutional Affairs with responsibility for Family

Justice. I recently hosted a seminar on child contact, where academics presented findings from research to improve Ministerial awareness and understanding.

We continue to view children's interests as being paramount and we want to encourage contact between children and non-resident parents where it is in the best interest of the child and safe for all family members.

Working with my hon. Friends in the Department for Constitutional Affairs, we are considering carefully how the family justice system and related children's services can better meet the needs of all children and their parents following relationship breakdown. We want to ensure that better outcomes are achieved for children by, where possible, helping parents agree contact arrangements without the intervention of the courts. We expect to conclude these considerations in the early part of this year and then to publish the Government's response to the Children Act Sub-Committee's report 'Making Contact Work'.

Children's Fund

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what variations there have been to the Children's Fund allocations for 2003 to 2006 notified in writing to local fund managers in January; [144925]

(2) what the final allocations for the Children's Fund were for 2002–03; [144926]

(3) when he will make an announcement on Children's Fund allocation for 2004–05. [144931]

Margaret Hodge: Allocations to Children's Fund partnerships came to £119 million in 2002–03.

We conducted a mid year review of expenditure in November 2003 for this financial year to identify and take back genuine under spend from the first half of the year.

We wrote to all partnerships on 19 December advising them that the programme had become over-committed. This is because after initial under spends Partnerships are now spending much closer to profile against allocations which deliberately exceeded budget provision because of the history of under spends. The higher spending by partnerships together with the contributions made by the Children's Fund to other initiatives for the 5 to 13-year-old age group.

All this means there will be some reduction in allocations for 2004–05 and 2005–06 in order that the programme can meet all its commitments and stay within its overall limit.

I am not able to confirm allocations for 2004–05 or 2005–06 before the end of January. I can confirm though that the Government remain committed to the valuable work of the Children's Fund and that next year's budget will enable the programme to continue to deliver preventive services for children and young people.

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding will be made available to the Lancashire Children's Fund for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [147041]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 12 January 2004]*: I am not able to confirm the allocations for Lancashire Children's Fund for 2004–05 and 2005–06 before the end of January. My officials have met with the appropriate representative bodies and wrote to all partnerships on 19 December 2003 explaining the difficulties that had occurred because of over programming coupled with mistaken estimates of partnerships ability to spend. This together with the contribution made to other initiatives means there will be some reduction in allocations for 04–05 and 05–06 in order that the programme can meet all its commitments and remain within its financial limits.

I can confirm though that the Government remain committed to the valuable work of the Children's Fund and that next year's budget will enable the programme to continue to deliver preventative services for children and young people.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many projects are funded by the Children's Fund; and if he will list them and the responsible parent organisation, where applicable; [147729]

(2) for what reason cuts have been made to Children's Fund grants in the middle of the year of operation; [147730]

(3) for what reason Children's Fund grants to projects signed up for three years will now not be paid in full; [147731]

(4) how many projects funded by the Children's Eund are likely to face cuts to their funding in the next financial year; [147732]

(5) how many projects funded by the Children's Fund have closed in the current financial year; [147733]

(6) how many Children's Fund-funded projects have appealed to the Children's Directorate appeal system against costs to their funding; and how many have been successful; [147748]

(7) for how long it is intended to run the appeal system set up for projects funded by the Children's Fund to appeal against cuts to their funding; [147749]

(8) what arrangements are in place to replace funds being cut to Children's Fund-funded projects with other public funds. [147750]

Margaret Hodge: There are 149 Children's Fund partnerships in England. These are listed in the annexe together with their lead and accountable bodies. The programme was launched in November 2001 and runs until March 2006. Each partnership is made up of representatives from the voluntary and statutory sector.

Children's Fund partnerships will continue to receive grants for 2004–05 and 2005–06. These grants will enable the partnerships to continue to deliver preventive services for five to 13-year-olds in their area. In the early years of the programme the Partnerships under spent their allocations. To avoid this recurring partnerships were allowed to increase their planned commitment with increased allocations and monies used for other initiatives for five to 13-year-olds. However, it has become clear that the partnerships have been more effective in their spending, to the point that they are

spending more closely to profile. In order to avoid over-spends, not permitted under Government accounting, the Department is taking action now so as to reduce the levels of over-commitment without damaging the programmes already in place.

A mid year review of expenditure was undertaken in November 2003 to identify and take back genuine under spend from the first half of 2003–04 and to estimate and take back likely under spends from the second half of the year.

The Department did not have a formal process for appealing against mid year review decisions. However, following representations from 11 partnerships, the Department wrote to all 149 on 19 December. We advised them that decisions on taking back under spend would be revisited where they were too harsh and that we would restore funds where partnerships ability to meet contractual commitments were compromised by our decisions. These measures will ensure the mid year review does not mean partnerships have to implement redundancies or close services. I expect the process of identifying the total number that need funds restored to be completed by the end of January.

In a letter to all partnerships before Christmas the Department also explained that there was over-commitment in the programme and that there will therefore be some reduction in allocations for 2004–05 and 2005–06 in order that the programme can spend within its limits. Officials are currently assessing the extent of over-commitment in the programme. I expect this work to be completed by the end of January so that we can confirm partnerships' allocations for 2004–05. Until then we have advised partnerships not to commission any new services.

There has not been any closure of Children's Fund partnerships. It is a key characteristic of the fund that decisions on which services to commission are taken locally, not by central Government, against the aims and objectives of the Children's Fund programme. Partnerships themselves may decide which services to retain or close at any time, in response to evolving local circumstances.

Partnership	*Accountable body*	*Region*	*Wave*
Birmingham	Birmingham City Council	West Midlands	1
Blackburn with Darwen	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	North West	1
Blackpool	Blackpool Borough Council	North West	1
Bolton	Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	1
Bradford	Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council	Yorkshire and Humber	1
Bristol	Barnardos South West	South West	1
Camden	Camden Local Education Authority	London	1
Cornwall	NCH	South West	1
Doncaster	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	Yorkshire and Humber	1
Gateshead	Gateshead Council	North East	1
Greenwich	Greenwich Council	London	1
Hackney	The Learning Trust	London	1
Halton	NCH	North West	1
Haringey	Haringey Council	London	1
Hartlepool	Hartlepool Borough Council	North East	1
Islington	Islington Council	London	1
Kent	Family Welfare Association	South East	1
Kingston upon Hull	Hull City Council	Yorkshire and Humber	1
Knowsley	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	1
Lancashire	NCH	North West	1
Leeds	Leeds City Council—Social Services	Yorkshire and Humber	1
Leicester	NCH	East Midlands	1
Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire County Council	East Midlands	1
Liverpool	Liverpool City Council	North West	1
Manchester	Manchester City Council	North West	1
Middlesbrough	NCH	North East	1
Newcastle upon Tyne	Newcastle City Council	North East	1
Newham	London Borough of Newham	London	1
Norfolk	Norfolk County Council	East	1
Nottingham	Nottingham Social Services	East Midlands	1
Oldham	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	1
Portsmouth	Portsmouth City Council	South East	1
Rochdale	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	1
Salford	Salford City Council	North West	1
Sandwell	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	1
Sheffield	Sheffield City Council	Yorkshire and Humber	1
Southwark	London Borough of Southwark	London	1
Stockton-on-Tees	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	North East	1
Sunderland	City of Sunderland	North East	1
Tower Hamlets	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	London	1
Barking and Dagenham	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	London	2
Barnsley	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Yorkshire and Humber	2
Bournemouth	The Children's Society	South West	2
Brent	London Borough of Brent	London	2
Brighton and Hove	Brighton and Hove City Council	South East	2
Calderdale	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Yorkshire and Humber	2
Cheshire	Cheshire County Council	North West	2
Coventry	Coventry City Council	West Midlands	2

Partnership	*Accountable body*	*Region*	*Wave*
Cumbria	Council for Voluntary Action South Lakeland	North West	2
Darlington	Darlington Borough Council	North East	2
Derby	Derby City Council	East Midlands	2
Derbyshire	Derbyshire County Council	East Midlands	2
Devon	Playlines Trust	South West	2
Durham	Durham County Council	North East	2
East Sussex	East Sussex County Council	South East	2
Hammersmith and Fulham	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	London	2
Isle of Wright	Isle of Wright Local Education Authority	South East	2
Kirklees	NCH	Yorkshire and Humber	2
Lambeth	Lambeth Social Services	London	2
Lewisham	London Borough of Lewisham	London	2
Luton	Luton Borough Council	East	2
Medway	Medway Council	South East	2
North East Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire Council	Yorkshire and Humber	2
North Lincolnshire	North Lincolnshire Council	Yorkshire and Humber	2
North Tyneside	North Tyneside Council	North East	2
North Yorkshire	NSPCC	Yorkshire and Humber	2
Northamptonshire	Northamptonshire County Council Education Service Finance	East Midlands	2
Northumberland	NCH	North East	2
Nottinghamshire	Nottinghamshire County Council	East Midlands	2
Peterborough	Peterborough City Council	East	2
Plymouth	Plymouth City Council	South West	2
Redcar and Cleveland	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	North East	2
Rotherham	External Funding Team, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Yorkshire and Humber	2
Sefton	Sefton Council	North West	2
Solihull	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	2
South Tyneside	South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council	North East	2
Southampton	Southampton City Council	South East	2
St. Helens	NCH	North West	2
Stoke-on-Trent	Voluntary Action Stoke-on-Trent	West Midlands	2
Suffolk	Suffolk County Council	East	2
Tameside	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	2
Telford and Wrekin	Borough of Telford and Wrekin	West Midlands	2
Torbay	The Children's Society	South West	2
Trafford	Trafford Borough Council	North West	2
Walsall	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	2
Waltham	London Borough of Waltham Forest	London	2
Wandsworth	Wandsworth Borough Council	London	2
Westminster	City of Westminster	London	2
Wirral	The Children's Society	North West	2
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton City Council	West Midlands	2
Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire County Council	East	3
Bracknell Forest	Bracknell Forest Borough Council	South East	3
Buckinghamshire	Buckingham County Council	South East	3
Cambridgeshire	Cambridgeshire County Council	East	3
East Riding of Yorkshire	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	Yorkshire and Humberside	3
Essex	Essex County Council	East	3
Hampshire	Hampshire County Council	South East	3
Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire County Council	East	3
Milton Keynes	Milton Keynes Council	South East	3
Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire County Council	South East	3
Reading	Turner's Court Youth Trust	South East	3
Slough	Slough Borough Council	South East	3
Southend-on-Sea	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	East	3
Surrey	Surrey County Council	South East	3
Thurrock	Thurrock Council	East	3
Wakefield	Wakefield M.D.C Social Services and Health Department	Yorkshire and Humberside	3
West Sussex	West Sussex County Council	South East	3
West Berkshire	West Berkshire Council, Children's Services	South East	3
Windsor and Maidenhead	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	South East	3
Wokingham	Wokingham District Council	South East	3
York	City of York Council	Yorkshire and Humberside	3
Barnet	London Borough of Barnet	London	3
Bexley	Bexley Council	London	3
Bromley	London Borough of	London	3
City of London	Corporation of London (Education Department)	London	3
Croydon	Croydon Voluntary Action	London	3
Ealing	London Borough of	London	3
Enfield	Opportunity Links Ltd.	London	3
Harrow	London borough of Harrow Education Department	London	3
Havering	London Borough of Havering	London	3
Hillingdon	London Borough of Hillingdon	London	3
Hounslow	London Borough of Hounslow	London	3

Partnership	Accountable body	Region	Wave
Kensington and Chelsea	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	London	3
Kingston-upon-Thames	Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames	London	3
Merton	Merton Voluntary Service Council	London	3
Redbridge	Redbridge Council for Voluntary Services	London	3
Richmond-upon-Thames	Richmond Council for Voluntary Service	London	3
Sutton	London Borough of Sutton	London	3
Bury	Bury MBC	North West	3
Stockport	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	3
Warrington	Warrington Children's Fund	North West	3
Wigan	Social Services Wigan Council	North West	3
Bath and North East Somerset	Barnardos South West	South West	3
Dorset	Dorset County Council	South West	3
Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire County Council	South West	3
North Somerset	Barnardos South West	South West	3
Poole	NCH (South West)	South West	3
Somerset	Barnardos South West	South West	3
South Gloucestershire	South Gloucestershire Council	South West	3
Swindon	Swindon Borough Council	South West	3
Wiltshire	Barnardos South West	South West	3
County of Herefordshire	Herefordshire Council	West Midlands	3
Dudley	NCH Children's Fund Dudley	West Midlands	3
Shropshire	Shropshire County Council	West Midlands	3
Staffordshire	Staffordshire County Council	West Midlands	3
Warwickshire	NCH Warwickshire	West Midlands	3
Worcestershire	Worcestershire County Council Youth Services	West Midlands	3
Leicestershire	Leicestershire County Council	East Midlands	3
Rutland	Rutland County Council	East Midlands	3
Bradford City MDC	Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council	Yorks and Humberside	1
Brighton and Hove City Council	Brighton and Hove City Council	South East	2
Bristol (Barnados Fund)	Barnardos South West	South West	1
Cornwall (NCH) (Kerrier)	NCH	South West	1
Durham County Council (Easington)	Durham County Council	North East	2
Greenwich Council	Greenwich Council	London	1
Haringey Council	London Borough of Haringey	London	1
London Borough of Brent Social	London Borough of Brent	London	2
London Borough of Southwark	London Borough of Southwark	London	1
Luton Borough Council	Luton Borough Council (Lifelong Learning)	East	2
Manchester City Council	Manchester City Council	North West	1
North Yorkshire (Scarborough)	North Yorkshire County Council	Yorks and Humberside	2
Northamptonshire County Council	Northamptonshire County Council Education Service Finance	East Midlands	2
Oldham MBC	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	1
Portsmouth City Council	Portsmouth City Council	South East	1
Rochdale MBC	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	1
Sandwell	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	1
Sheffield City Council	Sheffield City Council	Yorks and Humberside	1
Solihull MBC	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	2
Suffolk County Council (St. Edmundsbury)	Suffolk County Council	East	2
Sunderland City	City of Sunderland	North East	1
Wirral Metropolitan Borough	The Children's Society	North West	2

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to ensure that the appeals process following mid-year changes to the Children's Fund is available to relevant organisations. [148911]

Margaret Hodge: The Department met representatives from the main voluntary sector organisations involved in the Fund together with the LGA and the ADSS on 18 December. Following that meeting officials wrote to all Children's Fund partnerships on 19 December 2003.

We advised partnerships that where our decisions at the mid-year review had compromised partnerships' ability to their meet contractual obligations, we would revisit them. Furthermore, we set aside money to assist with this and to ensure that there was no premature closure of projects. The Children's Fund regional teams have been discussing the detailed implications with partnerships and I expect the process to be complete by the end of January.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he intends to announce resources for the Children's Fund for 2004–05. [148912]

Margaret Hodge: I expect to announce resources for the Children's Fund in 2004–05 at the end of January or early February.

Children's Green Paper

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his policy is, under the proposals outlined in the Children's Green Paper, on retention of data files kept on children when they become adults; and under what circumstances *(a)* children and *(b)* those with parental responsibility will have access to them. [145707]

Margaret Hodge: The Queen's Speech said that a Bill will be introduced to improve services designed to protect children. This will implement proposals contained in the Children's Green Paper "Every Child

Matters", and, subject to consideration of responses to the Green Paper consultation, will include proposals that each local authority should set up a local information sharing system to enable practitioners to share early information about children and young people so that better services can be provided to them and their families.

The Green Paper proposals relate to children and young people to age 19. Local authorities will be responsible for the proposed local information hubs and will be required to comply with the Data Protection Act in the way they manage and run the hubs. The data protection principles set out in the Act include requirements that personal data shall be accurate and up to date, not excessive for the purpose for which it is held and that it is kept for no longer than necessary. Data held on information hubs will be held in accordance with these requirements. How long data on any particular child is held will depend upon individual circumstances.

Except where there is an exemption under the Data Protection Act, children or those with parental responsibility for them would have access to the information held about them on the proposed information hubs, under the subject access provisions of the Data Protection Act. They would also be able to comment on any information held on the system that was inaccurate or which needed updating.

Class Sizes

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size for *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) Brent East constituency, (ii) the London Borough of Brent, (iii) London and (iv) England was in each year since 1997. [149897]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The requested information is given in the tables.

Maintained primary schools[1] : average class size[2] position in January each year, 1997 to 2003

	Classes taught by one teacher						
Location	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Brent East Constituency	26.1	27.0	27.1	27.3	27.4	26.4	26.9
Brent LEA	26.5	26.7	27.2	27.4	27.3	27.1	27.6
London	27.1	27.2	27.3	27.3	27.0	26.9	26.9
England	27.5	27.7	27.5	27.1	26.7	26.3	26.3

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Classes as taught during one selected period in each school on the day of the Census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Maintained secondary schools[1]: average class size[2] position in January each year, 1997 to 2003

	Classes taught by one teacher						
Location	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Brent East Constituency	20.3	19.9	20.2	20.9	21.8	21.0	22.4
Brent LEA	20.5	20.2	20.0	20.5	22.2	21.5	21.3
London	21.7	21.7	21.8	22.0	22.1	22.1	21.9
England	21.7	21.7	21.9	22.0	22.0	21.9	21.9

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Classes as taught during one selected period in each school on the day of the Census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Divorce Courts

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which of Mr. Justice Nicholas Wall's recommendations regarding the divorce courts system have been implemented. [148940]

Margaret Hodge: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Monmouth (Mr. Edwards) on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 293W.

Failing Schools

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the impact on the number of failing schools of providing a higher score as a result of failing in English than of failing in maths and science. [149873]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The Department has made no assessment of this particular matter. The weight attached to particular judgments within an individual school inspection is a matter for Ofsted. I have asked HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, to write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

Formula Spending Share (Deprivation)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the value of the formula spending share for each primary school pupil for deprivation is in each local authority for 2004–05. [150070]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The education formula spending share allocates the same value for each primary aged pupil with additional educational needs. For 2004–05, this value is £1,370. The proportion of primary aged pupils with additional educational needs is estimated in each authority using

measures of children in families in receipt of income support, children in families in receipt of working families tax credit and pupils who do not have English as their mother tongue.

Further Education Funding

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the level of funding per pupil in further education was in *(a)* Brent East, *(b)* the London borough of Brent, *(c)* London and *(d)* England in each year since 1997. [149901]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not collect information on the level of funding per pupil in further education at the local or regional level. Mark Haysom the Learning and Skills Council's Chief Executive will write to the hon. Member with details of further education spend per pupil in *(a)* Brent East, *(b)* the London borough of Brent, and *(c)* London. A copy of his letter will be placed in the House Library.

The following table shows funding per full-time equivalent student in further education in England from 1997–98 to 2003–04. These are cash figures that show total funding for the further education (FE) sector. The figures include monies provided for participation and certain funding for earmarked purposes, including capital, the Standards Fund and other special grants to colleges. These figures are consistent with those published in the 'Departmental Annual Report 2003'.

Funding per full-time equivalent student in further education 1997–98 to 2003–04

£

	Total funding
1997–98[1]	3,070
1998–99[1]	3,090
1999–2000[1]	3,380
2000–01[1]	3,640
2001–02[2]	3,890
2002–03[3]	4,020
2003–04[3]	4,240

[1] Actual
[2] Provisional
[3] Planned

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research his Department has undertaken to examine what the effect on provision would be were all the further education colleges funded by the Further Education Funding Council to withdraw from all work-based learning provision. [150006]

Alan Johnson: None. There is no evidence of which the Department is aware that further education providers are considering withdrawal from Work Based Learning for Young People (WBL) on a large scale. Further education providers currently deliver around 20 per cent. of WBL provision and are an important and valued means of delivering such learning to young people. Further education providers are now funded by the Learning and Skills Council, the body responsible for planning and funding all post-16 learning (other than higher education).

Higher Education

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the reasons why 10 per cent. of the pupils who achieve two A level passes do not go into higher education. [147015]

Alan Johnson: The Youth Cohort Study shows that around nine in 10 young people who achieve two or more A-levels by the age of 18 progress to Higher Education by the time they are 21.

Research published by the Department in 2001 ("Social Class and Higher Education: Issues Affecting Participation by Lower Social Class groups" Connor, H. at al DfEE Research Report No. 246) looked at the factors affecting participation in HE by different social class groups. It found that among those who were qualified to enter higher education but had decided against going, the main reasons were because they wanted to start work, because they did not need a higher education qualification for their chosen career or because of the expected costs involved.

In addition, the Youth Cohort Study identified other reasons for choosing not to enter HE:

to earn money and become financially independent;

not achieving the grades for their chosen course;

self belief, with young people thinking they could not get in or they would find higher education too difficult.;

lack of interest.

Other research has identified ethnicity, housing tenure and parental education as significantly affecting the decision to enter higher education.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research he has commissioned into the effects of tuition fees on medical manpower planning. [149759]

Alan Johnson: I have not commissioned such research. Since the introduction of tuition fees in 1998, demand for places on medical courses has continued to outstrip significantly the number of places, despite an increase in the number of places available. Between 1999 and 2001, plans for some 2,250 more medical school places in the UK were announced. As a result of the extra investment, the number of students entering medical school will increase to over 7,300 in 2005. The number of UK applicants to study medicine at UK universities is also at its highest since 1986 (the earliest year for which data is available).

We do not anticipate any significant impact on demand for medical courses after the introduction of variable fees. The Department of Health will, however, be monitoring demand for, and take-up of, places on medical courses. Department of Health Ministers have made it clear that they will, if necessary, take measures to ensure that any increase in the level of tuition fees will not have an adverse impact on the supply, retention, diversity or quality of students on health professional courses, including medicine.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research he has commissioned into the repayment of tuition fees by women medical students. [149760]

Alan Johnson: I have not commissioned such research. Medical students do not have to repay student loans until they graduate and earn over £15,000 per year. Doctors earn considerably in excess of the national average: a newly qualified GP can expect to earn over £45,000, and will receive considerably more than that in time. Consultants will earn even more. So medical graduates will be able to pay off their student loan for living costs and for tuition fees comparatively rapidly.

If, despite the high salary levels generally, some doctors who work part time or take career breaks pay off their student loans more slowly, the student support proposals announced by my right. hon. Friend on 8 January are helpful. The Government intend to write-off outstanding student loan balances after 25 years. This will apply to those entering HE from 2006 and cover maintenance and fee loans.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will estimate the number of higher education students who will be affected by the introduction of top-up fees. [149774]

Alan Johnson: The number of students affected by variable fees will depend on a wide range of factors, including decisions on fee levels to be taken by institutions providing higher education to full time undergraduates.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether he will require universities charging higher than average variable fees to pay their academic staff more. [149947]

Alan Johnson: Higher education institutions are responsible for their own academic and administrative affairs, including pay for their staff. The Government plays no part in setting levels of pay in the higher education sector. Universities themselves are the best judges of how to deploy the funding they receive.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the current higher education participation rate in England is with respect to people under the age of 30. [149509]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 20 January 2004]*: The current Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) is 43.9 per cent. for 2001/02.

The HEIPR covers English-domiciled 17 to 30-year-old first-time entrants to Higher Education courses who remain on their course for six months or more.

The HEIPR will replace the Initial Entry Rate (IER) as the way that we measure progress toward 50 per cent. A time-series of HEIPR figures will be published in Spring 2004.

The IER was recently quality-reviewed under guidelines issued by the Office for National Statistics. The review (published in November 2003) concluded that the IER was "basically robust"[1] but highlighted some minor shortcomings which the HEIPR corrects for. More detail can be found in the report of the review, a copy of which has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

An Age Participation Index (API) also exists for Great Britain—though does not include students aged over 20 or part-time students. The current figure for 2001/02 is 35 per cent.

[1] Review of the Initial Entry Rate into Higher Education, DfES, p6.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills from which Learning and Skills Council-funded work-based learning providers funding contracts were removed in 2002–03. [149990]

Alan Johnson: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent by each Learning and Skills Council on employer initiatives in 2003; and if he will make a statement. [150007]

Alan Johnson: As a member of the national Skills Alliance the Learning and Skills Council has a major part to play in securing the effective implementation of our Skills Strategy. The Strategy sets a new framework for tackling our long-standing skills gaps.

The amount spent by each local LSC on employer initiatives is an operational matter and I have asked Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, to write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions his Department has held with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the appropriateness of transferring responsibility for skills from Learning and Skills Councils to elected regional assemblies. [150089]

Alan Johnson: The Government's national Skills Strategy, published in July 2003, emphasises the need for all relevant agencies to work together collaboratively in support of the skills agenda. We are committed to building strong and effective Regional Skills Partnerships, which will enable Regional Development Agencies, local Learning and Skills Councils, and other key stakeholders to work together to deliver skills, training, business support and employment services. The partnerships will help take forward the priorities identified in the regional economic strategies.

Elected Regional Assemblies also have an important role in training and skills, and in our White Paper 'Your Region, Your Choice' we set out proposals for each Assembly to appoint two members to the Board of each local LSC in its region, and for the national LSC to consult Assemblies on its guidance to local LSCs.

As well as these regional and sub-regional roles, there is a vital national dimension to the planning and funding of learning and skills, discharged by the Learning and Skills Council. The Skills Alliance Delivery Partners Group, which is chaired by the LSC Chief Executive Mark Haysom and includes an RDA representative, is

charged with stimulating co-ordinate action between the relevant national and regional agencies to secure effective delivery of the skills strategy.

Nursery Vouchers

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will give parents of three-year-old children flexibility to use the 10 hours per week nursery voucher; and if he will make a statement; [149501]

(2) what assessment he has made of the number of children in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gloucestershire who attend nursery schools for 10 hours or more per week; and if he will make a statement. [149502]

Margaret Hodge: The Nursery Education Voucher scheme ended in May 1997. It was replaced by an entitlement to a free high quality nursery education place which may be taken up at a range of providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors. From April 2004, six months ahead of the original target, the entitlement will be extended to all three year olds. A free place consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions for thirty-three weeks of the year. It is underpinned by a statutory Code of Practice which encourages local authorities and providers to allow parents to take up their entitlement flexibly.

Around 88 per cent. of three year olds nationally are already receiving some free provision. The latest figures on Under 5's provision in England were published in Statistical Bulletin 'Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2003', a copy of which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics .The number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four year olds in Gloucestershire Local Education Authority area and England was as follows:

Number[1] of free nursery education places taken up by three and four year olds in Gloucestershire Local Education Authority area and England

Location	*Three year olds*		*Four year olds*		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[3]*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[4]*	*Total 3 and 4 year olds[5]*
Gloucestershire LEA	50	4,200	4,200	2,200	10,600
England	218,700	226,100	472,200	107,100	1,024,000

[1] Part-time equivalent number of children.
[2] Includes classes in maintained primary schools only. Gloucestershire does not have any maintained nursery schools.
[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Supplementary data collection exercise.
[5] The totals do not add up to their constituent parts due to rounding.

Ofsted

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many inspectors have resigned from Ofsted in each year since 1996–97. [149872]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

Parentline

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the total cost to public funds has been of supporting the charity Parentline Plus since its inception; [147715]

(2) what the percentage change in the number of telephone calls to Parentline by parents is expected to be once the investment of £763,000 has been made; [147716]

(3) what the cost to public funds is estimated to be per email answered by the charity Parentline; [147717]

(4) what the estimated number of service users is for the email service of the charity Parentline; [147718]

(5) how many parents are expected to benefit from the recent investments made to the charity Parentline. [147719]

Margaret Hodge: Parentline Plus is the operating name of FamilyLives, and was formed through the merger of Parentline UK, Parent Network and the National Stepfamily Association, in winter 1999. Parentline Plus is a registered charity.

Family support helpline

From financial year 2000–01 onwards (the first full financial year applicable), central Government funds supporting Parentline Plus in its work as a family support helpline have been:

£

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Family Support Grant (ex-Home Office, now Department for Education and Skills)				
Project to develop materials for Afro-Caribbean communities	145,000			
Core funding		1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Share Parent Plus for activity based materials project			48,000	
Project to support parents of teenagers	45,000	40,000		

£

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Telephone parenting support funded with Department of Health		20,000	20,922	
Parenting Fund (Department for Education and Skills)	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]762,690
Totals	190,000	1,060,000	1,068,922	1,762,690

[1] Family Support Helpline extension, as detailed below

The Home Office commissioned an evaluation of the Parentline Plus family support helpline. This was carried out between August 2002 and March 2003 by the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London, and will be published on the Home Office website shortly. The evaluation recognised that Parentline Plus provides a good quality helpline service to over 60,000 callers pa (three quarters of whom were first-time callers), and that further expansion in the helpline service is necessary to meet demand from callers. The charity makes significant use of trained volunteers.

The main work supported by the recent £762,690 investment from the Parenting Fund is:

(a) expanding helpline provision to answer 75,000 calls pa (equivalent to a 25per cent. increase in call numbers);

(b) developing and piloting an email service to answer an anticipated 10,000 emails pa;

(c) developing and piloting a more efficient system for call handling, in particular for improved ways of working with more specialist providers of family support advice;

(d) developing a ring-back telephone support service offering more detailed support to those parents who need most help;

(e) establishing telephone-based parenting groups; and

(f) promotion of the helpline and email service.

Staffing and systems at Parentline Plus will be flexible so that call-takers can deal with either telephone calls or emails. This means that the 75,000 telephone call/10,000 email balance may change, to best meet demand. It is therefore not possible to quote the cost per email dealt with. It is not possible to state the exact number of parents benefiting from recent investment, although the number of calls/emails are detailed above.

Other work

From the financial year 2000–01 onwards (the first full financial year applicable), central Government funding (including that from Children's Fund partnerships) to Parentline Plus for other work has been:

£

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Marriage and Relationship Support Grant (ex- Lord Chancellor's Department, now Department for Education and Skills)				
Core funding	60,000	61,500	62,000	62,000
Research and development		40,000		
Youth Justice Board (NDPB reporting to Home Office)		n/a	n/a	n/a
Information dissemination, marketing of telephone support service, advice to YJB, equipment for call centres	64,914			
Improving Behaviour in School Team (Department for Education and Skills)				
Bullying helpline	180,000	183,500	188,928	192,744
Research project on bullying, with Family Service Units			80,000	40,000
Section 64 (ex-Department of Health, now Department for Education and Skills)	n/a			n/a
Capital grant			5,000	
Telephone parenting courses project		20,200	20,700	
Teenage Pregnancy Unit (ex-Department of Health, now Department for Education and Skills)	n/a			
Time to Talk project to help parents talk to their children about sex and relationships (also for staff training).		76,944	97,872	
Delivery of work connected to relationship work and helpline				88,500
Sure Start (Department for Education and Skills)	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]15,000
Children's Fund (Department for Education and Skills) (including funding by Children's Fund partnerships)	n/a	n/a		
Young Runaways helpline project			15,998	31,720
Piloting Services and Disseminating/Alone in London			21,456	74,909
Parenting courses for parents and carers in local communities across Liverpool.			5,785	
Wirral Parents' Group and Phoneline project				6,976
Essex helpline services.				3,825
Totals	304,914	382,144	497,739	515,674

[1] Preliminary work on Change Development Project

Procurement (Outsourcing)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on his Department's procurement policy with regard to offshore IT and call centre outsourcing; whether his Department is outsourcing IT and call centre jobs to offshore companies; to which countries his Department has outsourced these jobs; how much his Department has spent on this outsourcing in each of the last two years; and how much has been budgeted for this purpose for the next two years. [147592]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department's procurement policy is based on value for money, having due regard to

propriety and regularity. My Department complies with the EU Treaty, including the principle of non-discrimination, the EC procurement directives and the UK's international obligations. Provided these principles, and other more detailed arrangements such as those set out in the "Staff Transfers in the Public Sector—Statement of Practice", are satisfied, there is no reason why my Department should not let contracts to offshore companies. This said, my Department has not outsourced any former internal IT and call centre jobs to offshore companies. We have no plans to do so. My Department also lets a considerable number of contracts for services with a very wide variety of partners. Some of those contracts have included IT and call centre elements as an integral part of the delivery arrangements. In no case has there been a direct contractual relationship with an offshore company for an IT or call centre related contract.

Pupil Referral Units

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital funding each local education authority has been allocated by the Department to establish pupil referral units. [148430]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 19 January 2004]*: The Department does not allocate funding specifically for the setting up or maintaining of pupil referral units. Local education authorities receive revenue funding for pupils with high cost needs through the high cost pupil sub-block of the Education Formula Spending Share. The proportion of pupils with high cost needs is estimated for each authority using population data, children in families in receipt of Income Support and low birth weight.

School Meals

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether a school governing body can refuse to accept delegation from a local education authority of responsibility for the school meals service. [150028]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 22 January 2004]*: The effect of the Education (Transfer of Functions Concerning School Lunches etc.) (England) (No. 2) Order 1999 is that when a school's budget share includes funding for meals, the statutory duties to provide school lunches (including free school meals for eligible pupils), and to comply with nutritional standards, are transferred to the school's governing body. The governing body cannot refuse. In Essex funding is delegated in budget shares for all schools and consequently the statutory duties rest with the schools' governing bodies. If the authority provides a 'buy-back' service a school may choose to purchase that from the authority; if it does not, the school governing body must make alternative provision. The Department is in touch with Essex County Council regarding support for schools as the current contract comes to an end.

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether there is a responsibility upon a local education authority to provide school meals to pupils attending its schools. [150908]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Local education authorities have a duty to provide free and paid for school meals that meet nutritional standards. Where a school has a delegated budget for meals, this duty becomes the responsibility of the governing body. From April 2000, funding for school meals was delegated to all secondary schools. Primary and special schools can opt for delegation.

Secondary Schools (Collaboration)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* formal, *(b)* federated and *(c)* informal collaborations are taking place (i) between secondary schools and (ii) between secondary schools and further education colleges, broken down by local education authority. [150025]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 22 January 2004]*: 70 per cent. of all secondary schools are involved in at least one formal collaborative network with other secondary schools. The numbers of schools involved in formal collaborative networks by LEA are contained in the following table.

The Department does not hold details of collaboration taking place between secondary schools and further education colleges; nor does the Department collect information on collaboration that takes place informally.

Number of schools involved in formal collaborative networks by LEA

LEA	*Number of secondary schools in network*
Barking and Dagenham	8
Barnet	13
Barnsley	14
Bath and North East Somerset	10
Bedfordshire	20
Bexley	9
Birmingham	76
Blackburn with Darwen	9
Blackpool	8
Bolton	16
Bournemouth	6
Bracknell Forest	4
Bradford	28
Brent	13
Brighton and Hove	9
Bristol City of	18
Bromley	11
Buckinghamshire	21
Bury	5
Calderdale	10
Cambridgeshire	23
Camden	9
Cheshire	32
Cornwall	23
Coventry	14
Croydon	16
Cumbria	27
Darlington	5
Derby	11
Derbyshire	24
Devon	23
Doncaster	17
Dorset	17
Dudley	16
Durham	30
Ealing	12
East Riding of Yorkshire	10
East Sussex	24

Number of schools involved in formal collaborative networks by LEA

LEA	*Number of secondary schools in network*
Enfield	17
Essex	62
Gateshead	10
Gloucestershire	33
Greenwich	14
Hackney	8
Halton	8
Hammersmith and Fulham	8
Hampshire	37
Haringey	10
Harrow	6
Hartlepool	6
Havering	13
Herefordshire	8
Hertfordshire	51
Hillingdon	12
Hounslow	14
Isle of Wight	4
Isles of Scilly	0
Islington	9
Kensington and Chelsea	4
Kent	70
Kingston upon Hull City of	15
Kingston upon Thames	8
Kirklees	18
Knowsley	11
Lambeth	10
Lancashire	59
Leeds	43
Leicester	16
Leicestershire	14
Lewisham	12
Lincolnshire	54
Liverpool	32
Luton	12
Manchester	22
Medway	11
Merton	5
Middlesbrough	6
Milton Keynes	10
Newcastle upon Tyne	11
Newham	15
Norfolk	31
North East Lincolnshire	8
North Lincolnshire	9
North Somerset	9
North Tyneside	11
North Yorkshire	19
Northamptonshire	27
Northumberland	18
Nottingham	17
Nottinghamshire	31
Oldham	15
Oxfordshire	22
Peterborough	10
Plymouth	12
Poole	6
Portsmouth	8
Reading	3
Redbridge	15
Redcar and Cleveland	11
Richmond upon Thames	6
Rochdale	14
Rotherham	17
Rutland	2
Salford	14
Sandwell	18
Sefton	22
Sheffield	27
Shropshire	18
Slough	10

Number of schools involved in formal collaborative networks by LEA

LEA	*Number of secondary schools in network*
Solihull	12
Somerset	28
South Gloucestershire	10
South Tyneside	9
Southampton	9
Southend-on-Sea	9
Southwark	12
St. Helens	11
Staffordshire	25
Stockport	8
Stockton-on-Tees	13
Stoke-on-Trent	17
Suffolk	27
Sunderland	17
Surrey	25
Sutton	7
Swindon	7
Tameside	9
Telford and Wrekin	8
Thurrock	9
Torbay	4
Tower Hamlets	16
Trafford	13
Wakefield	13
Walsall	18
Waltham Forest	17
Wandsworth	9
Warrington	7
Warwickshire	24
West Berkshire	10
West Sussex	16
Westminster	8
Wigan	15
Wiltshire	13
Windsor and Maidenhead	5
Wirral	22
Wokingham	5
Wolverhampton	18
Worcestershire	16
York	11
Total	2,391

Source:
EduBase 13/01/04

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans his Department has to provide help to develop management information systems where secondary schools or further education institutions are *(a)* undertaking collaborative working and *(b)* are part of a federated structure. [150026]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The Department has provided funding and is working closely with LEAs to support them in ensuring they have an infrastructure for management information systems in all their maintained schools, including those schools working collaboratively with other educational institutions or those within a federated structure. Total funding is £30 million via LEAs in 2001–02 and £7 million supplementary in 2002–03. Collaborative working is also supported in the form of access to on-line communities through the National College of School Leadership's Talk2Learn facility and will be part of a single annual conversation with the education system on targets, priorities and support and improved data flows.

Student Finance

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average student loan taken out by students from *(a)* Huntingdon, *(b)* Cambridgeshire and *(c)* England was in each year since 2000–01. [149685]

Alan Johnson: The tables show the average full-time income-contingent loan taken out by students in Cambridgeshire and in England and the average mortgage style loan taken out by students in England.

Data on the average student loan taken out by students from Huntingdon are not available.

Average income-contingent loan[1,2] taken out by domicile of students in academic years 2000/01 to 2002/03[3] (£)

	Academic year		
	2000/01	*2001/02[4]*	*2002/03 (provisional)*
Cambridgeshire[5,6]	3,170	3,210	[7]—
England	3,160	3,190	3,240

[1] New student support arrangements were introduced from academic year 1998/99. New students in 1998/99 (apart from certain specified exceptions) received support for maintenance expenditure through means-tested grants (comprising about a quarter of the support available) and non income-assessed student loans (comprising about three quarters of the support available). From 1999/2000 students who entered higher education after 1998/99 received support for maintenance expenditure through loans, of which approximately three quarters of the value was non income-assessed. Loans made under these arrangements are repayable on an income contingent basis.

[2] Excludes the fixed rate loans (£500) for eligible part-time students, introduced in September 2000

[3] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10

[4] Latest year for which data by local education authority (LEA) are available

[5] LEA of domicile of student

[6] LEA level data have been taken from available information and may include a small number of loans which have been authorised for payment but not paid.

[7] Regional breakdown not yet available

Source:
Student Loans Company

Average mortgage style[1] loan taken out by domicile of student—academic years 2000/01 to 2002/03[2]

£

	Academic year		
	2000/01	*2001/02*	*2002/03 (provisional)*
England	1,460	1,520	1,580

[1] Loans available to students who entered higher education up to academic year 1997/98 and those who entered in 1998/99 under existing arrangements. These loans are non income assessed and are repayable on a fixed term, mortgage style, basis.

[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest £10.

Source:
Student Loans Company

Data on the local education authority of domicile of students taking out fixed rate mortgage style loans (normally those who entered higher education before 1998/99) are not available because applications are made through the students' education institution. The data provided in the answer relate to student loans available from the Student Loans Company and do not include bank loans, overdrafts, and informal loans from family and friends.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many students he expects to receive the full £1,500 maintenance grant, assuming current student numbers; and how many will receive an amount of grant; [148563]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost to public funds of the introduction of higher education maintenance grants of £1,500 in 2006. [148575]

Alan Johnson: Based on the current student cohort we estimate about 30 per cent. of English and Welsh students will benefit from the full grant when it is introduced in the 2004/05 academic year. Approximately a further 10 per cent. of students should benefit from a partial grant. I refer my hon. Friend to the Regulatory Impact Assessment, published on 8 January, which sets out the costs of increasing the grant to £1,500 a year from 2006/07. Copies of the Regulatory Impact Assessment were placed in the Library of the House it is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what fees will be chargeable to students for part-time degrees at *(a)* universities and *(b)* further education colleges under the provisions of the Higher Education Bill. [150537]

Alan Johnson: Universities and further education colleges are currently free to determine the level of fees which are chargeable to part-time students in higher education. The Higher Education Bill will not change this.

Sure Start

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the steps his Department is taking to monitor the effectiveness of the Sure Start programme. [148641]

Margaret Hodge: A major evaluation of the Sure Start programme began in January 2001. It will examine the effectiveness of Sure Start on children, families and communities, both in the short, medium and long-term by tracking a sample of eight thousand (8,000) children and their families over time. The first information on impact and effectiveness will become available over the next 12 months.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have had contact with Sure Start in Battersea since its inception. [144773]

Margaret Hodge: Contact by Sure Start local programmes is defined to mean that a child aged 0–3 years and/or their parent or carer has taken up services. Since its inception in October 2000 Sure Start Battersea reports that it has provided services to some 630 children under four living in the catchment area.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the annual budget is for the Sure Start Childcare and Early Years magazine. [147929]

Margaret Hodge: The Sure Start Childcare and Early Years magazine was published twice in 2003. The cost for

the two issues was £66,339.61 including distribution to 37,000 partners.

The Sure Start Childcare and Early Years magazine was merged with our Upstart magazine at the end of 2003. The new magazine is called Sure Start. The planned annual budget for the new magazine is approximately £160,000 which includes distribution to 60,000 partners.

Helen Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which constituencies in Yorkshire and Humberside have one or more Sure Start initiatives. [149344]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows the constituencies in Yorkshire and Humberside that have operational Sure Start local programmes, Early Excellence Centres, neighbourhood nurseries and children's centres based within them. Figures for neighbourhood nurseries however are changing by the day as new settings open. The Government intend that, wherever possible, existing Sure Start provision will develop into children's centres as part of the expansion of high quality integrated services to all pre-school children and their families living in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged wards in England.

Constituency	*Number of Sure Start local programmes*	*Number of Early Excellence Centres*	*Number of neighbourhood nurseries*	*Number of children's centres*
East and North Ridings				
Beverley and Holderness, James Cran, Conservative			2	
Brigg and Goole, Ian Cawsey, Labour			1	
City of York, Hugh Bayley, Labour	1			
Cleethorpes, Shona McIsaac, Labour	1		2	
Great Grimsby, Austin Mitchell, Labour	4		3	1
Hull East, John Prescott, Labour	2		2	
Hull North, Kevin McNamara, Labour	2		3	
Hull West and Hessle, Allan Johnson, Labour	3		2	
Scarborough and Whitby, Lawrie Quinn, Labour	1		2	
Scunthorpe, Elliot Morley, Labour.	2		1	
Selby, John Grogan, Labour	1		1	
Yorkshire East, Greg Knight, Conservative	1		1	
South Yorkshire				
Barnsley Central, Eric Illsley, Labour	2		9	
Barnsley East and Mexborough, Jeff Ennis Labour	2		1	
Barnsley West and Penistone, Michael Clapham, Labour	1		3	
Don Valley, Caroline Flint, Labour	1		1	
Doncaster Central, Rosie Winterton, Labour	1			
Doncaster North, Kevin Hughes, Labour	3			
Rotherham, Denis MacShane, Labour	1	1	1	
Rother Valley, Kevin Barron, Labour.	1		1	1
Sheffield Attercliffe, Clive Betts, Labour		1 (part of the Sheffield EEC network)	2	
Sheffield Brightside, David Blunkett, Labour.	3	1 (part of the Sheffield EEC network)	1	
Sheffield Central, Richard Caborn, Labour	3	1 (part of the Sheffield EEC network)	3	
Sheffield Heeley, Meg Munn, Labour	1			
Sheffield Hillsborough, Helen Jackson, Labour			2	
Wentworth, John Healey, Labour		1	2	1
West Yorkshire				
Batley and Spen, Mike Wood, Labour			1	
Bradford North, Terry Rooney, Labour	2		3	
Bradford South, Gerry Sutcliffe Labour			4	
Bradford West, Marsha Singh, Labour	1	1	2	
Calder Valley, Chris McCafferty, Labour	1		1	
Dewsbury, Ann Taylor, Labour	2		1	
Halifax, Alice Mahon, Labour	2			
Hemsworth, Jon Trickett, Labour	1			
Huddersfield, Barry Sheerman, Labour	3	1	3	
Keighley, Ann Cryer, Labour			1	
Leeds East, George Mudie, Labour.	1		1	3
Leeds Central, Hilary Benn, Labour.	3		4	
Leeds North East Fabian Hamilton, Labour	1			
Leeds North-west, Harold Best, Labour.	1			
Leeds West, John Battle, Labour	1		2	
Morley and Rothwell, Colin Challen Labour	1		3	
Pontefract and Castleford, Yvette Cooper, Labour.			2	
Shipley, Chris Lesley, Labour	1			
Wakefield, David Hinchcliffe, Labour	2	1	1	

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many toothbrushes have been distributed free by each Sure Start project. [149398]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* This information is not collected. It is estimated that to date some 450,000 packs have been distributed to families under the Department of Health's Brushing for Life scheme. This scheme operates in the 29 former district health authority areas with the highest levels of tooth decay and all Sure Start Local Programmes in areas where the water is not fluoridated. Many Sure Start Local Programmes also distribute similar packs to babies and young children under their own oral health promotion schemes.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what legal services and goods Sure Start projects are *(a)* authorised and *(b)* forbidden to provide at no cost to the recipient. [149399]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* There are 524 Sure Start local programmes delivering services to children under 4 and their families in the most disadvantaged areas of the country. They aim to achieve better outcomes for children, parents and communities by increasing the availability of child care, improving health, education and emotional development for young children, and supporting parents as parents and in their aspirations towards employment. Services to meet these aims are designed in consultation with families in the area to ensure they reflect local needs. Programmes are neither prevented nor required to provide any goods or legal services free of charge.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to evaluate Sure Start schemes; and what arrangements have been made to ensure that lessons from such evaluations are disseminated. [145079]

Margaret Hodge: A comprehensive evaluation of the Sure Start programme began in January 2001. It will examine the effectiveness of Sure Start on children, families and communities in the short, medium and long-term by tracking a sample of eight thousand (8,000) children and their families over time. The first information on impact and effectiveness will become available over the next 12 months.

Lessons from the evaluation will be disseminated widely; through the Sure Start Unit Research Publication series, academic journals and practitioner publications and through workshops, seminars and conferences for both practitioners and the academic community.

Teacher Qualifications

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will make a statement on the relative value of the *(a)* English and *(b)* Welsh Qualified Teacher Status qualifications; [150599]

(2) what assessment he has made of obstacles to prospective teachers who live on the Welsh borders qualifying as teachers; [150600]

(3) whether a teacher who completes their initial teacher training course in England may undertake the practical experience element in a Welsh school. [150603]

Mr. Miliband: The funding, content and standards required of courses of initial teacher training provided by Welsh institutions are matters for the National Assembly for Wales. Courses funded by the Department for Education and Skills through the Teacher Training Agency and which lead to the award of Qualified Teacher Status by the General Teaching Council for England are governed by the Education (School Teachers' Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003. These require that any periods of practical experience undertaken as part of a course of initial teacher training in England must take place wholly or mainly at schools in England, but do not preclude some periods of teaching experience taking place elsewhere. The same regulations provide for the automatic recognition in England of teaching qualifications awarded by the General Teaching Council for Wales.

Teenage Parents

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the proportion of teenage parents who were in local authority care in each of the last five years. [147334]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is not currently available at national level. Officials within DfES are currently identifying ways in which this data can be collected. At the meeting of the Technical Working Group on Personal Social Services Statistics, held on 23 October 2003, it was agreed that the question "Was the young person a parent at 31 March (if female)" would be included in the SSDA903 return for 2004–05. In addition, the Technical Working Group agreed that other questions for future returns and detailed guidance be referred to an ad hoc Working Group for further consideration. The newly established Working Group will assess the feasibility of obtaining information about births among young people in and leaving care and identify methods for collecting this information, taking account of legal and confidentiality considerations.

Tribunal Judgments

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what mechanism exists for monitoring and enforcement of local authority compliance with Special Education Needs and Disability Tribunal judgments; and if he will make a statement. [146979]

Margaret Hodge: There are no formal mechanisms to monitor or enforce the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal's decisions on special educational needs appeals or disability claims. By law, local education authorities (LEAs) must carry out the Tribunal's decision. If a parent believes that an LEA has failed to comply with the Tribunal's decision within the given timescale they can write to complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, who will consider what action to take.

Universities (Children in Care)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children in care went to university in each of the last five years; and how many completed their course in each year. [147331]

Margaret Hodge: The Department for Education and Skills collects data from local authorities about accommodation and activity of children and young people in their nineteenth year, who were recently looked after by local authorities. This data collection was introduced for the first time in 2002–03. The collection specifically records the number of young people who were in education, training or employment at age 19 and of those, the number involved in higher education. It does not identify which are at university or those in other age groups.

In 2002–03, of the 4,900 young people in the cohort, 2,400 were in education, training or employment on their nineteenth birthday. Of these, 280 were in higher education (6 per cent. of children). This figure includes those studying for degrees, diplomas in higher education, teaching and nursing qualifications. Data is not available on how many completed their courses.

University for Industry

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether University for Industry-funded learning targets were achieved in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03. [149992]

Alan Johnson: In 2001–02, my Department set Ufi/learndirect 12 targets. Of these nine can be classified as "learning targets"—the others referred to the information and advice service/learning materials. Ufi achieved eight out of these targets. In 2002–03, Ufi/learndirect met four out of seven "learning targets".

Website Publications

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria his Department uses when deciding whether a leaflet which it publishes is to be made available only on its website. [149556]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department does not publish leaflets on websites only. We do make printed material available on our websites but it is not departmental policy to publish leaflets online only.

Working Skills

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to increase the proportion of the working age population in the West Midlands reaching degree level qualifications. [149832]

Alan Johnson: These are a range of initiatives from which the region will benefit.

Foundation Degrees are a positive step in expanding opportunities for people to enter higher education. The combination of academic study and work-based learning with this flexible approach means that they appeal to a wide variety of people including those already in work. The Higher Education Funding Council for England has invited the region to bid for 1,000 additional student places in 2004/05.

For mature learners we are providing an important pathway to higher education through Access to HE Courses. The West Midlands is served by one of the larger Access providers—the Open College Network for the West Midlands.

The Aimhigher Programme in conjunction with the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Learning and Skills Council is very active in the region in improving links between its schools, FE colleges and HEIs, with part of its remit to encourage more young people to take up degrees.

We are also funding five 14–19 pathfinders in the West Midlands to test local delivery of 14–19 education and training with the aim, amongst other things, of equipping young people to enter further or higher education.

Excellence in Cities is raising aspirations and attainment in Schools. A part of their remit is to encourage pupils to consider higher education. From 2005 Excellence in Cities will be involved in all secondary schools across the City of Coventry.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Cambridge Private Planning Application

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he will allow the Cambridge private planning application to proceed. [150787]

Keith Hill: My right hon. Friend, the Deputy Prime Minister issued his decision to grant planning permission for the application by Cambridge University to build a B1(b) research centre on 20 November 2003. My right hon. Friend, the Deputy Prime Minister has no further jurisdiction with regard to this matter and cannot therefore make any further comment. The implementation of this permission is now a matter for Cambridge University. However, the decision is the subject of a legal challenge.

Council Tax

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to local authorities on the minimum council tax level appropriate for a band D home. [150123]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued no guidance on the minimum level of council tax.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* average, *(b)* maximum and *(c)* minimum council tax is for a band D home. [150378]

Mr. Raynsford: The average area council tax for a Band D property occupied by two adults in England in 2003–04 is £1,102. The maximum is £1,294 and the minimum is £570.

In practice, lower figures than those quoted above are payable where discounts have been granted, and zero council tax is payable for Band D properties that are exempt.

Erith Marshes

John Austin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the environmental consequences of building on the Erith Marshes; what assessment he has made of whether such development conflicts with the *(a)* local council's biodiversity plan and *(b)* recommendations of the biodiversity team of the

Mayor of London; what assessment he has made of the increased flood risk in adjacent areas if the development proceeds; and if he will make a statement. [150904]

Keith Hill: These are matters for consideration by the local planning authority as part of the planning process. Where a project is receiving funding through the Thames Gateway programme a flood risk assessment is required, and applicants must consult with the Environment Agency where there is a potential risk of flooding.

EU Funding

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the funding amount allocated from the European Regional Development Fund is during the 2000 to 2006 period to *(a)* the North-East, *(b)* the North-West and *(c)* Yorkshire and Humberside. [150091]

Mr. Raynsford: The following amounts of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) have been allocated for the period 2000 to 2006. The allocations are in euros.

	€
North-East Objective 2	581,330,000
North-West Objective 1	893,048,000
North-West Objective 2	808,330,000
Yorkshire and Humber Objective 1	785,588,000
Yorkshire and Humber Objective 2	448,360,000

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister from which budget within his Department the sum for funding for the European Regional Development Fund is allocated. [150092]

Mr. Raynsford: In England, all Departments with European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) policy responsibilities provide their own budgetary cover. However, all income and related expenditure from ERDF are accounted to parliament by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as the Managing Authority. The devolved administrations have separate arrangements for their own geographical areas.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the changes in the number of jobs in Kent County Fire and Rescue Service that would arise as a result of the proposed regionalisation of the Fire and Rescue Service. [149306]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him and to the hon. Members for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow), for Taunton (Mr. Flook), for North Wiltshire (Mr. Gray), for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr. Hammond), for Poole (Mr. Syms) and for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1457–58W.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will list those whom he has consulted on the plans to regionalise the Kent Fire and Rescue Service; [149307]

(2) what discussions he has had with *(a)* retained and *(b)* full-time firefighters in Kent on his plans to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service; and what their advice was. [149309]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him and the hon. Members for Buckingham, Taunton, North Wiltshire, Runnymede and Weybridge, South East Cambridgeshire, Brentwood and Ongar, Poole and Spelthorne on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1454–57W.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what powers he would implement the regionalisation of the Fire and Rescue Service in Kent without the consent of Kent county council. [149308]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Members for Buckingham, Taunton, North Wiltshire, Runnymede and Weybridge, South East Cambridgeshire, Brentwood and Ongar, Poole and Spelthorne on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1458–59W.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research relating to Kent he has commissioned to provide the evidential basis for his plans to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service. [149310]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Members for Buckingham, Taunton, North Wiltshire, Runnymede and Weybridge, South East Cambridgeshire, Brentwood and Ongar, Poole and Spelthorne on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1453–54W.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what level of grant has been provided to each *(a)* metropolitan fire authority, *(b)* county council fire authority and *(c)* combined fire authority for each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [150949]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will put the information that the hon. Member for Wealden has asked for in relation to metropolitan fire authorities in the Library once officials have completed work on the local government settlement.

However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is unable to provide the information that the hon. Member has asked for in relation to county council fire authorities because the grant that they receive is general grant to cover all services supplied by the county. No amount is hypothecated for fire and rescue services. Nor can the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provide the requested information on combined fire authorities because they will not have received any grant before 2004–05.

Nonetheless, the Government have delivered another good settlement for fire and rescue authorities. The Government have ensured that once again all authorities receive above inflation increases, with fire and rescue authorities receiving increases in grant between 3.5 per cent. and 5 per cent. and averaging 4.3 per cent. Since taking office, this Government have increased funding by 30 per cent. in real terms.

	Expenditure provision for the fire and rescue service in England (£ million)	*Increase on previous year (percentage)*
1997–98	1,237	4.4
1998–99	1,299	5.0
1999–2000	1,346	3.6
2000–01	1,393	3.5
2001–02	1,463	5.0
2002–03	1,521	4.0
2003–04	1,583	4.0

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he gives to fire authorities on the level of financial reserves they should maintain. [150950]

Phil Hope: My right hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich and Woolwich (Mr. Raynsford) wrote to all fire and rescue authorities with guidance on 23 January. In that letter my right hon. Friend acknowledged that for Combined Fire Authorities the transition to precepting status has raised a number of issues, including the level of financial reserves. The letter clarified the Government's position on a number of points, including:

(a) In line with CIPFA guidance, there is no recommended level of reserves.

(b) The impact on council tax payers should be considered by authorities when considering reserves. This may point to spreading any burden on council tax payers over a number of years.

(c) The level of risk will not change as a result of the move to precepting status. CFAs should explore arrangements with their constituent authorities that reflect this.

Fire Service Circular 1/2004, also issued on 23 January, contained more detailed guidance on these issues.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take account of the need for fire authorities to build up reserves in decisions on capping precepting fire authorities. [150951]

Phil Hope: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has made it clear that he expects council tax and precept increases in all authorities to be in low single figures. This applies to all authorities, including fire and rescue authorities. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is prepared to use his capping powers if necessary. When considering capping, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would want to look closely at local authorities' budgets and council tax rises before coming to a view on what might be appropriate factors to take into account.

Flooding

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many flood plains in England have been given planning permission for housing in each of the last five years. [147737]

Keith Hill: Data on planning permissions granted within the flood risk areas defined by the Environment Agency is not collected or held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the Environment Agency and local planning authorities report annually under the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA's) High Level Target 12 on consultations on developments in floodplains and the extent to which the decision follows the agency's advice. The report for 2002–03 can be found on the Environment Agency website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister land use change statistics show that for the period 1998 to 2001, 9 per cent. of land that changed to residential use in England was in flood risk areas, and 12 per cent. of new dwellings were in the areas defined by the Environment Agency as at risk from coastal or river flooding. Some 64 per cent. of these were on previously developed land, much of which was defended against flooding to an appropriate minimum standard. About 12 per cent. of the land area of England is within the river and coastal flood risk areas.

Housing

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library copies of the Chief Executive of the Rent Service's correspondence with the Rent Service's area manager for London since November 2001. [150138]

Keith Hill: Correspondence between the Chief Executive of the Rent Service and the Rent Service's Area Manager for London is largely of a confidential nature under Part 2 (2) of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. To identify any correspondence that is not confidential would incur disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to find new sites upon which to build *(a)* private and *(b)* social housing; and what budget has been allocated for that purpose in 2003–04. [150379]

Keith Hill: The Sustainable Communities Plan sets out the policies, resources and partnerships necessary create a better balance in housing supply and demand. This includes the steps the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is taking to improve site assembly for both private and social housing. It is backed by £22 billion investment over three years.

Key initiatives include:

Provision of additional homes in designated growth areas, with £610 million over three years for site assembly, delivery mechanisms, additional affordable housing and essential local infrastructure. Combined with London, the growth areas have the potential to deliver an extra 200,000 homes above planned levels.

Making better use of surplus public sector land, for instance through a new register established by English Partnerships and through the introduction of new arrangements for its disposal. Identifying sites for additional housing, which would include developments for both private housing, affordable housing and homes for key workers, is one of the key priorities for English Partnerships.

Proposals to allow local authorities to seek affordable housing on smaller sites where this is justified, a measure particularly important in the South-east where almost 80 per cent. of housing sites are less than half a hectare in size.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures he has taken to ensure that new housing estates are not built on land that is prone to flooding; and what plans he has for further measures. [150381]

Keith Hill: The Government's policy requirements for England have been given in Planning Policy Guidance Notes 3 "(Housing)" and 25 "(Development and Flood Risk)". PPG25 categorises the suitability of land for various types of development, including housing, of the basis of the flood risk maps issued by the Environment Agency. The policies in PPG25 are due to be reviewed later this year against possible developments in flood risk assessments since it was issued in 2001.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of social housing is owned and operated by private housing foundations; and what plans he has for the further transfer of social housing to such foundations. [150382]

Keith Hill: In 2003 the breakdown between social housing owned by registered social landlords and local authorities was 41.4 per cent. and 58.6 per cent. respectively. The transfer of local authority housing to registered social landlords remains one of the three options available to local authorities where additional resources are required to deliver decent homes.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to encourage council tenants to take better care of their rented property. [150384]

Keith Hill: The duty to carry out on-going repairs and maintenance as well as any necessary major improvement works to a home lies with the local authority landlord rather than the tenant. Certain small, urgent repairs which are likely to affect the tenant's health, safety or security are covered by the 'Right to Repair', which means that by law, these must be carried out by the local authority quickly and at no cost to the tenant.

However, through their tenancy agreement, tenants may have responsibilities to carry out certain types of repair or to behave in a way which does not cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours. The Council Tenant's Charter, published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is readily available to councils and tenants and provides further details of the rights and responsibilities of council tenants.

Ms Buck: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what proportion of tenants in the social rented sector are paying rents above the average rent for the appropriate bedroom category in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each London borough; [150400]

(2) what proportion of tenants in the social rented sector are paying rents £10 or more above the average for their bedroom size in *(a)* each region of England and *(b)* each London borough; [150401]

(3) what proportion of tenants in the social rented sector are paying £10 or more above the average for properties with *(a)* one bedroom, *(b)* two bedrooms, *(c)* three bedrooms and *(d)* four or more bedrooms. [150402];

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hold data on rents paid by tenants, but only at the level of the average rent paid to RSLs/LAs for each bedroom category. However, the information requested is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect on demand for housing in the UK of the housing needs of nationals of the EU accession states who may come to the UK. [151066]

Keith Hill: No assessment has been made of the impact upon demand for housing of immigrants who may come to the UK from EU accession countries.

However, this Government does not believe that housing shortages in London and the south-east can be blamed on international migration. We recognised in the Sustainable Communities Plan that for more than 30 years all Governments failed to meet housing need.

The Sustainable Communities Plan sets out the policies, resources and partnerships that will achieve the step change essential to turn around the legacy of decades of neglect and under-investment, including:

£5 billion for more affordable homes to be built, including at least £1 billion for key worker housing.

Measures to ensure delivery of 930,000 new homes in existing regional plans for the south-east to 2016.

Additional homes to be provided in designated growth areas, with £610 million over three years for site assembly, delivery mechanisms, additional affordable housing and essential local infrastructure. Combined with London, the growth areas have the potential to deliver an extra 200,000 homes above planned levels.

Measures to make better use of the existing housing stock, especially to bring empty properties back into use.

IT Contracts

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list information technology contracts in his Department and its predecessors with a value of above £20 million in each of the last 10 years; what the inception date for each system was; when it became fully functional; when it became fully debugged; and what the cost of over-runs has been. [146190]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and those components of former Departments that make up the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have not let any contracts that meet this description.

Local Government

Mr. Dorrell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the total value of central government grant paid to each local authority in Leicestershire in each financial year between 1996–97 and 2003–04. [149464]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is tabled as follows.

£ million

	1996–97[1]	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Leicestershire County Council								
Specific grants inside AEF	22.812	15.668	15.945	25.960	41.017	54.495	71.908	48.995
Revenue Support Grant	244.985	127.070	130.033	131.938	126.384	141.285	119.944	154.610
National non domestic rates	188.387	115.272	121.614	132.527	149.629	147.894	162.341	163.571
Total grant	456.184	258.010	267.592	290.425	317.030	343.674	354.193	367.176
Blaby								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.100	0.094	0.091	0.087	0.093	0.086	0.105	0.220
Revenue Support Grant	0.271	0.375	0.434	0.212	0.000	0.194	0.000	0.945
National non domestic rates	3.018	2.704	2.747	2.959	3.292	3.280	3.707	3.153
Total grant	3.389	3.173	3 272	3.258	3.385	3.560	3.812	4.318
Charnwood								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.217	0.230	0.214	0.231	0.354	0.319	0.361	0.637
Revenue Support Grant	2.792	3.102	3.428	3.208	2.851	3.453	2.963	4.765
National non domestic rates	5.417	4.900	4.995	5.360	5.917	5.921	6.656	5.358
Total grant	8.426	8.232	8.637	8.799	9.122	9.693	9.980	10.760
Harborough								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.081	0.082	0.081	0.080	0.088	0.080	0.104	0.216
Revenue Support Grant	0.636	0.852	0.624	0.549	0.334	0.443	0.131	1.063
National non domestic rates	2.506	2.290	2.366	2.561	2.863	2.851	3.258	2.680
Total grant	3.223	3.224	3.071	3.190	3.285	3.374	3.493	3.960
Hinckley and Bosworth								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.127	0.131	0.134	0.137	0.157	0.145	0.180	0.287
Revenue Support Grant	0.819	0.978	1.036	0.857	0.610	0.894	0.568	1.683
National non domestic rates	3.455	3.095	3.138	3.376	3.720	3.703	4.137	3.496
Total grant	4.401	4.204	4.308	4.370	4.487	4.742	4.885	5.466
Melton								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.065	0.067	0.071	0.066	0.072	0.065	0.060	0.138
Revenue Support Grant	0.872	0.927	0.970	0.938	0.810	0.992	0.824	1.469
National non domestic rates	1.648	1.475	1.493	1.607	1.763	1.783	2.015	1.670
Total grant	2.585	2.469	2.534	2.611	2.645	2.840	2.899	3.277
North West Leicestershire								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.144	0.144	0.147	0.151	0.152	0.174	0.179	0.386
Revenue Support Grant	1.922	2.150	1.685	1.548	1.386	1.671	1.371	2.416
National non domestic rates	2.940	2.659	2.704	2.914	3.238	3.225	3.647	2.990
Total grant	5.006	4.953	4.536	4.613	4.776	5.070	5.197	5.791
Oadby and Wigston								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.062	0.067	0.067	0.081	0.102	0.094	0.108	0.154
Revenue Support Grant	0.508	0.643	0.671	0.571	0.417	0. 595	0.417	1.023
National non domestic rates	1.878	1.689	1.716	1.841	2.009	2.018	2.273	1.947
Total grant	2.448	2.399	2.454	2.493	2.528	2.707	2.798	3.123
Leicester City								
Specific grants inside AEF	1.117	9.188	9.413	12.963	22.630	32.027	55.142	47.292
Revenue Support Grant	24.016	148.702	153.958	152.799	151.781	160.180	158.277	187.441
National non domestic rates	10.377	66.883	69.487	74.954	84.757	81.834	89.118	84.754
Total grant	35.510	224.773	232.858	240.716	259.168	274.041	302.537	319.487
Rutland								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.041	0.620	0.911	1.188	1.701	3.421	4.681	3.698
Revenue Support Grant	0.549	6.748	6.199	5.835	5.236	6.075	5.646	8.899
National non domestic rates	1.190	7.833	8.330	9.080	10.279	10.393	11.622	10.480
Total grant	1.780	15.201	15.440	16.103	17.216	19.889	21.949	23.076
Leicestershire Police Authority								
Specific grants inside AEF	0.340	1.024	1.602	0.000	0.000	0.000	6.721	7.031
Revenue Support Grant	15.848	16.343	16.530	17.096	15.935	17.615	15.452	25.535
Police Grant	47.056	48.312	49.102	51.332	53.166	55.515	55.660	60.032
National non domestic rates	18.929	18.198	18.032	19.412	21.499	21.470	23.380	13.198
Total grant	82.173	83.877	85.266	87.840	90.600	94.600	101.213	105.797

[1] Figures for 1996–97 are not comparable with those for later years for Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City and Rutland due to local government organisation. This resulted in Leicester City and Rutland becoming unitary authorities on 1 April 1997.

Notes:

1. AEF = Aggregate External Finance
2. More generally, figures have not been adjusted to take account of changes between years in function or responsibility.

Source:

RA and RS returns to ODPM

Mr. Flook: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what representations he has received from Taunton Deane borough council on the level of increase received in *(a)* revenue support grant and national non-domestic rates and *(b)* rent allowances for handling rents and council tax benefit; and if he will make a statement; [150065]

(2) by what percentage central Government funding to Taunton Deane borough council has changed in 2004–05; [150066]

(3) what the *(a)* revenue support grant and *(b)* national non-domestic rate settlement for Taunton Deane was for (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [150084]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received two representations from Taunton Deane borough council on the provisional local government finance settlement 2004–05, which include comments on the transfer of funding for rent allowances and council tax benefit (CTB) to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

In order to make a fair comparison, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has assessed what Formula Grant the authority would have received in 2003–04 had the transfer of benefits taken place in the previous year. On this basis the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) plus National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) will increase by 3.3 per cent.

In 2003–04 Taunton Deane received £3.458 million in RSG and £3.579 million in NNDR. Under the Government's proposals for 2004–05, Taunton Deane receives £3,680 million in RSG and £2,824 million in NNDR.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what his policy is on enabling councils to raise a greater proportion of their income themselves; [150133]

(2) what plans he has to reform the way in which local councils are funded; [150376]

(3) what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Chancellor of the Exchequer and *(b)* the Prime Minister regarding re-structuring the way in which local councils are funded. [150377]

Mr. Raynsford: The ways in which local councils are funded are being considered by the Balance of Funding Review which is due to report in the summer. Papers for the Review's Steering Group are available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/balance.htm.

Lottery Revenue

Mr. Willis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total value is of Lottery revenue used to support Government-sponsored projects within his Department since 1997. [149627]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no policy or operational responsibility for distribution of National Lottery Fund.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Estelle Morris) on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 45W.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the Questions tabled by the hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield for Named Day Answer on 19 January, reference *(a)* 148012, *(b)* 148011 and *(c)* 148014. [150230]

Yvette Cooper: The Parliamentary Questions tabled by the hon. Member for Named Day answer on 19 January were all duly answered on the day requested.

PPG25

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many and what percentage of planning applications rejected by planning authorities pursuant to revised PPG25 have been subsequently allowed on appeal. [150873]

Keith Hill: The Environment Agency's report on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) high-level target 12—Development and flood risk—contains details of 50 appeals in 2002–03, which had involved a sustained objection by the agency on flooding grounds. Of these, two were withdrawn by the appellant and in five cases the flooding objection was resolved before the appeal decision.

In four cases (8 per cent.), appeals for minor development were allowed contrary to advice from the Environment Agency. Six appeals (12 per cent.) were allowed with the agency's objections fully mitigated through planning conditions and 33 appeals (66 per cent.) were dismissed, 30 of which were for minor developments. 28 cases are reported as dismissed using agency advice and five as dismissed not using Agency advice. Further details are in the report, which is available on the Internet at www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Prison Leavers

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what strategy the Government have for the reintegration of prison-leavers into social housing and their surrounding community. [144094]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

The Social Exclusion Unit report on reducing re-offending by released prisoners, published in July 2002, recommended that the Government develop and implement a National Rehabilitation Strategy involving all relevant departments and agencies. In response, the Home Office has set up two inter-departmental groups of Ministers and officials to develop an action plan planned for publication in early 2004. Its work strands include finance and benefits; drugs; health; employment, training and education; children and families; and accommodation.

Within the accommodation strand, the Home Office, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), and the Department for Work and Pensions are working together to devise an accommodation strategy for offenders. This will aim initially to increase the number of people leaving prison with some form of accommodation arranged. Its longer terms aims will be: to assess and identify the particular accommodation needs of each offender; to enable offenders to maintain or, where appropriate/to close down their accommodation while in

custody; and to develop systems that enable offenders to access appropriate and sustainable housing options on release. The strategy will encompass the roles and responsibilities of the correctional services, local authorities and other housing providers, the voluntary sector and Jobcentre Plus. Pilots are currently being developed to test how best to join up these services, working initially with street crime offenders.

The strategy will build on some important provisions already in place in the community and custody: the Homelessness Act 2002; the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002; the Supporting People programme; and the Prison Service's Custody to Work Initiative.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether elected regional assemblies will have power to determine transport-related priorities within their regions. [150077]

Mr. Raynsford: The transport powers of elected regional assemblies were set out in the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions" (Cm 5511).

Elected regional assemblies will be responsible for identifying transport priorities and producing a regional transport strategy, advising the Government on funding allocations for local transport schemes and for allocating Rail Passenger Partnership grants. They will also have powers to make proposals to the Highways Agency and the Strategic Rail Authority for schemes of regional importance.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he expects elected regional assemblies to have the power to determine how public spending within the region is allocated. [150079]

Mr. Raynsford: The finance powers of elected regional assemblies were set out in Chapter 5 of the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions" (Cm 5511).

Assemblies will be funded primarily by central Government grant and will have freedom to spend their funding as they judge best.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which powers elected regional assemblies will take from existing local authorities. [150080]

Mr. Raynsford: The powers and responsibilities of elected regional assemblies were set out in the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions" (Cm 5511). The Fire White Paper, "Our Fire and Rescue Service" (Cm 5808), published in June 2003, subsequently announced that responsibility for the fire and rescue service will transfer to a regional level in regions which choose to have an elected assembly. Other than this element, the powers of elected regional assemblies will not be drawn from local authorities.

Regional Economic Disparities

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he has taken since 1997 to close economic disparities between the English regions. [149692]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government have pursued an active regional policy since 1997 by:

Setting up the Regional Development Agencies to promote economic development and regeneration in the regions and supporting their work with £1.8 billion (for 2003–04) in annual funding;

Facilitating the establishment of voluntary regional chambers/assemblies, and developing the role of Government Offices;

Announcing proposals for directly elected regional assemblies in those regions that wish to have them which will assist in improving regional economic performance;

Putting in place a stable macroeconomic framework to provide an essential basis for economic growth both nationally and regionally;

Agreeing a PSA target to make sustainable improvements in the economic performance of all English regions and to reduce the persistent gap in growth rates between the regions;

Commissioning Sir Michael Lyons to make recommendations on the relocation of civil service and other public sector posts to the English regions.

Regional Government

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total number of staff working in the Government Office for the Regions in each region is; what change in staff numbers there would be in regions where an elected regional assembly is established; and what the total savings would be consequent on these reductions. [149648]

Yvette Cooper: The total number of staff currently working in the Government Office by region is:

Government Office	*Number of staff*
London	296
East	266
West Midlands	320
East Midlands	283
North West	351
North East	256
Yorkshire and Humber	306
South West	344
South East	320

The number of people that may transfer from each Government Office when an elected assembly is created will vary between regions. But it will probably be between 60 to 100, based on existing staffing levels for the activities that would be expected to transfer to an elected regional assembly, including responsibility for administering EU structural funds.

It is estimated that about £5 million per year of the running costs of regional assemblies will be directly offset because staff will be transferring from existing bodies, including the region's Government Office.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what additional scrutiny the regional chambers in each of the English regions have undertaken since 2001. [149702]

Mr. Raynsford: Since 2001, the regional chambers have undertaken a variety of scrutiny activities in respect of the work of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), funded by Government grant. Chambers report to the region on the work of the RDAs and provide recommendations that seek to improve their effectiveness.

The reports and recommendations arising from these activities are published and widely disseminated to regional partners. Chambers usually issue between two and four reports every year.

Rehousing (Brent)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average waiting time for a person to be rehoused in Brent was in each year since 1997. [149883]

Keith Hill: The information on the average waiting time for a person to be rehoused in Brent is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people are on the housing list waiting to be rehoused in Brent. [149884]

Keith Hill: Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list (excluding tenants awaiting a transfer) as at 1 April in their annual Housing Investment programme return. As at 1 April 2003 the latest reported figures are 13,425.

Skills Funding

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it is his policy that powers and funding in relation to skills should transfer from Learning and Skills Councils to elected regional assemblies. [150088]

Mr. Raynsford: The powers and responsibilities of elected regional assemblies were set out in the White Paper, "Your Region, Your Choice": "Revitalising the English Regions" (Cm 5511). Paragraph 4.29 sets out the responsibilities elected regional assemblies will have for learning and skills.

Telecoms Companies

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many telecommunication companies have been overcharged in business rates in the last five years; and how much was repaid to them on appeal in each year. [149210]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Thames Gateway

John Austin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Association of British Insurers regarding flood risk in the Thames Gateway Development Area; and if he will make a statement. [150903]

Keith Hill: The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has regular meetings with my hon. Friend, the Member for Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley), to discuss flood management issues generally. Officials at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will shortly be discussing flood management issues in the Thames Gateway growth area with the ABI.

HEALTH

Alendronate

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the clinical efficacy of Alendronate (Fosamax) in the treatment of osteoporosis, following trials at Manchester Royal Infirmary. [149385]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 20 January 2004]:* The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) have been looking at five osteoporosis drugs, including Fosamax (Alendronate), as part of a technology appraisal. Their draft recommendations are currently out for consultation. NICE has a key role to play in widening choice. Patients and carers need clear authoritative advice on the sort of care that might be appropriate for them and the standards of care they can expect from the national health service. NICE is due to publish its technology appraisal on drug therapies for osteoporosis in June 2004.

Ambulance Services

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions have taken place between the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service and the Greater Manchester Ambulance Service on improving *(a)* the handling of 999 calls and *(b)* other matters relating to ambulance services. [148252]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Antibiotics

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what antibiotic usage was for each NHS hospital in England in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by specialty; and if he will make a statement. [147509]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This data is not collected centrally.

Cancer

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidents of skin cancer there have been in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years; and what assessment he has made *(a)* to determine the causes of skin cancer and *(b)* to determine the action needed to reduce the incidence of skin cancer. [147936]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Data on the number of incidents of skin cancer overall are not available in the form requested. Cancer registrations for non-melanoma skin cancer are unreliable and incomplete as the registers are being continuously updated retrospectively.

The number of registrations of newly diagnosed cases of malignant melanoma of the skin in the United Kingdom for each of the last five years are shown in the table.

Registrations of newly diagnosed cases for skin cancer in the United Kingdom, 1996–2000 [1]

	Malignant melanoma of the skin[2]
1996	5,700
1997	6,000
1998	6,100
1999	6,000
2000	7,000

[1] Figures rounded to nearest 100.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code C43.

Sources:

1. Office for National Statistics.
2. Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit.
3. Scottish Cancer Registry.
4. Northern Ireland Cancer Registry.

A new sun awareness initiative, SunSmart, was launched on 27 March 2003 by Cancer Research UK to make the public aware of the dangers of exposure to the sun. The campaign is based on the successful SunSmart campaign in Australia. The campaign has received funding from the United Kingdom Health Departments' this year. We will be providing further funding for the campaign for next summertime.

The campaign's aim is to increase the profile of the issue of skin cancer and methods of effective sun protection. The key objectives are to increase knowledge of the causes of skin cancer, to increase awareness of actions that can be taken to prevent skin cancer and to influence positively attitudes to sun protection.

The Department has separately developed the SunSafe web pages in 2002, designed with children in mind. These are available on the Department's website at: www.doh.gov.uk/sunsafe

Information is also contained on the Wired For Health website at: www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk/teaching/sun/intro.html

We continue to fund annually the Meteorological Office to provide the daily ultra-violet index in the media (television, radio, Meteorological Office website).

The Department also provides core funding to the National Radiological Protection Board, which provides expertise on ultra-violet radiation issues.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidents of lung and cervical cancer there were in the North West in each of the last five years; and what action has been taken in the North West *(a)* to prevent cancer, *(b)* to inform the public about the causes of cancer, *(c)* to provide equipment and services to treat cancer and *(d)* to provide palliative care for patients who are terminally ill. [147937]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested on lung cancer and cervical cancer in the North West is shown in the tables.

1. Primary Diagnosis (ICD10 code C34) Lung Cancer: Finished in-year admission episodes by regional office of treatment—NHS hospitals in England, 1998–99 to 2002–03

	North West Regional Office	Unknown
1998–99	16,023	—
1999–2000	5,088	—
2000–01	5,878	—
2001–02	6,881	—
2002–03	7,299	1,163

2. Primary Diagnosis (ICD10 code C53) Cervical Cancer: Finished in-year admission episodes by regional office of treatment—NHS hospitals in England, 1998–99 to 2002–03

	North West Regional Office	Unknown
1998–99	2,415	—
1999–2000	672	—
2000–01	691	—
2001–02	718	—
2002–03	796	81

Notes:

1. Finished in-year admissions—a finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year diagnosis (Primary Diagnosis)—The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

2. Grossing—figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2001–02 and 2002–03, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Information about the Merseyside and Cheshire Cancer Network and its work can be found in its annual report, which is available on www.mccn.nhs.uk.

Care Provision

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures the Government is taking to ensure that there is provision in place in *(a)* residential and *(b)* domiciliary care settings to provide sufficient care to cover the projected increase in the number of those requiring it. [150598]

Dr. Ladyman: The Planning and Priorities Framework 2003–06 sets a target for local councils to increase the number of those supported intensively to live at home to 30 per cent, of the total being supported by social services at home or in residential care. The average annual increase in resources for personal social services of six per cent, over these three years is consistent with this target. It is for local councils to use these increased resources to ensure that the right amount and range of care is made available, taking account of local circumstances and priorities.

Cataracts

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to reduce the costs of NHS cataract services to a level equivalent to that being achieved by Netcare. [149028]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* We are developing a nationally set tariff for most national health services activity, including cataract activity, based on NHS average prices. All NHS trusts will be expected to achieve tariff by 2008.

Through the treatment centre programme and the introduction of a single agreed care pathway for cataract we are aiming to maximise productivity, improve clinical outcomes and reduce variation in cost and quality.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many patients are waiting for cataract operations; [149473]

(2) how many patients joined the waiting list for cataract operations in each of the last five years. [149475]

Mr. Hutton: Central waiting list returns are collected by specialty, for example, ophthalmology. Information on the number of patients waiting for cataract operations specifically is therefore not available, as cataract operations are a procedure within ophthalmology.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cataract operations were carried out in each of the last five years. [149474]

Mr. Hutton: Published information on the number of hospital admissions for cataract operations is available up to 2002–03. The number of operations in each of the last five years for which information is available is shown in the table.

	Number of finished episodes
2002–03	270,605
2001–02	247,847
2000–01	237,507
1999–2000	201,020
1998–99	201,682

This information is available on the Department's web-site under hospital episode statistics.

Children's Diets

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out for each of the last 10 years for *(a)* England, *(b)* each NHS region and *(c)* each strategic health authority the number and proportion of (i) boys, (ii) girls, and (iii) children aged (A) 4–5, (B) 6–7, (C) 8–9, (D) 10–11, (E) 12–13, (F) 14–15 and (G) 16–17 who have nothing to eat before school (1) once a week, (2) twice a week, (3) three days a week, (4) four days a week, (5) every school day and (6) at weekends. [146352]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information is not collected in the form requested. However, the National Diet and Nutrition Survey, which carried out a survey in 1997 of the food consumption of young people aged four to 18 years, found that the youngest group of children, aged

four to six years, were significantly more likely than the oldest group, aged 15 to 18 years, to have eaten breakfast cereals (not whole-grain or high fibre types). Boys were more likely than girls to eat non-whole-grain or high fibre cereals—74 per cent, to 64 per cent.

Civil Service (Disabled People)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out the number of employees in his Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148991]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Disability broken down by disability type	*Total number of employees*
Visual impairment	20
Hearing impairment	30
Speech impairment	3
Walking impairment	13
Physical co-ordination impairment	26
Reduced physical capacity	26
Severe disfigurement	1
Learning difficulties	3
Mental illness	21
Progressive conditions	20
Neurological conditions	12
Other[1]	28

[1] This figure refers either to an unspecified disability or a disability that is outside of the categories for which data is collected.

Staff in the Department provide information on disability on a voluntary basis so the figures in the table may not reflect the total number of staff who have a disability.

Colonoscopy

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of those undertaking colonoscopy had been fully trained to do so in the latest year for which figures are available. [150235]

Mr. Hutton: All professional staff who undertake colonoscopy procedures have received the appropriate training to do so. A national initiative to improve standards of training for all endoscopic procedures is under way. £9 million has been made available over the next three years.

Information about the number of staff who undertake colonoscopy is not held centrally.

Departmental Staff

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff in his Department work in *(a)* the West Midlands and *(b)* North Staffordshire. [146906]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has 56 staff who work in the West Midlands, including those who work in North Staffordshire. The number of staff working in North Staffordshire is not recorded separately.

Departmental Website

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria his Department uses when deciding whether a leaflet which it publishes is to be made available only on its website. [149557]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Leaflets, being short publications primarily intended for a public audience, are printed. However, it is our policy to make the content of these and other publications available on the Department of Health's web-site and other departmental-commissioned web-sites, in line with the Government's e-delivery objectives.

There are occasions when other types of publications are made available only electronically. In this case, consideration of audience access to the internet is important and documents may be published exclusively on the web when the intended audience is a specialist one with ready access to the internet.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 5 January to questions, reference 145050 and 145051, if he will list those audiology departments in England that do not fit digital hearing aids routinely. [147758]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 13 January 2004]:* The Department of Health does not hold centrally a list of audiology departments in England. However, details of those audiology departments that are or will be involved in the modernising hearing aid services project are available at www.mhas.info. Details have been placed in the Library.

Electronic Recruitment

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Department will retain the intellectual property rights for the services developed by third parties for the NHS electronic recruitment project. [144825]

Mr. Hutton: The electronic recruitment service for the national health service will be provided by Methods Consulting Ltd. under contract to the Department of Health for five years from 11 August 2003. Methods Consulting owns the intellectual property.

Eye Infections

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether contact lens wearers are at risk, when washing their face with tap water, of developing a serious eye infection caused by the water borne amoeba acanthamoeba keratitis; and what is being done to reduce the incidence of acanthamoeba keratitis in tap water. [147939]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There is always a risk of contracting acanthamoeba keratitis when contact lenses are exposed to water as acanthamoeba can be found in chlorinated swimming pools, baths, showers and bottled water as well as in domestic tap water; with approximately one in 30,000 contact lens wearers

contracting the disease. It is believed that any increased risk for contact lens wearers by washing their face with tap water is minimal.

Contact lens solutions have been developed in recent years to take account of this. All contact lens wearers are advised to only use recognised cleaning solutions and follow practitioners' directions when cleaning their lenses.

Surface water is treated in a manner to minimise the risk of parasites entering the distribution system and the main risk to water lies with 'natural' contamination of water in domestic storage.

Foundation Hospitals

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 602–3W, on foundation hospitals, whether guidance and best practice will be automatically sent to foundation hospital trusts without the need for a specific request. [149505]

Mr. Hutton: National health service foundation trusts will, like NHS trusts, receive the NHS Chief Executive's bulletin. This includes information on all Departmental guidance issued, which can be accessed through the Department's website.

General Medical Council

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the individuals and organisations from which his Department, its executive agencies and the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible received a response to the consultation, Reform of the General Medical Council: a paper for consultation. [149871]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The Department of Health received responses to its consultation on the Reform of the General Medical Council from the following:

Academy of Medical Royal Colleges
Association of Surgeons of GB and Ireland
British Medical Association (BMA)
BMA Wales
Department of Health, Northern Ireland
General Chiropractic Council
General Medical Council
Joint Consultants Committee
Medical Defence Union
Medical Defence Organisation
Medical Practitioners' Union
Royal College of Anaesthetists
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal College of Midwives
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Ophthalmologists
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal College of Pathologists
Royal College of Physicians
Royal College of Physicians (Edinburgh)
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
Royal College of Radiologists
Royal College of Surgeons
Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales
Consumers' Association
Diabetes UK
Harrogate CHC
National Consumer Council
North Staffordshire CHC
Welsh Consumer Council
Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training and General Practice
UK Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education
West Midlands Deanery
Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries
National Clinical Assessment Authority
National Patient Safety Agency
Privy Council Office
The Wellcome Trust
Amber Valley Primary Care Trust
Basildon PCT
Eastern Wakefield PCT
Gloucester Partnership NHS Trust
Harrow PCT
Kennet and North Wilts PCT
Lewisham PCT
North Surrey PCT
North East London Health Authority
Northamptonshire Heartlands NHS Trust
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust
Oxfordshire Mental Healthcare NHS Trust
Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woolwich
Royal London Hospital
South East London Strategic Health Authority
South Gloucestershire PCT
SW London and St. Georges Mental Health NHS Trust
Wakefield West PCT
West Yorkshire Health Authority
Weston Area Health NHS Trust
Dr. W. I. Jones
Mr. T. Benson
Dr. J. Cawson
Dr. P. Anastassiadis
Dr. J. Jin
Dr. A .Robbins

General Practitioners

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints the Health Service Ombudsman has received about general practitioners removing patients from their practice lists in each of the past five years; how many of these complaints led to investigations; how many investigations led to criticisms of the general practitioners' decisions; and how many patients have then been reinstated on to the lists of the general practitioners concerned. [148152]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held by the Department. The Health Service Ombudsman publishes information about the handling of cases in her

annual report, copies of which are available in the Library and on the Ombudsman's website at: www.ombudsman.org.uk

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with primary care trusts on night-time cover following the introduction of the new contract for general practitioners. [142259]

Mr. Hutton: The Department is working closely with strategic health authorities to ensure that primary care trusts and local providers of out of hours medical services are ready to accommodate the changes arising from the new general medical services contract.

Haemoglobinopathies

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reason there is no centre for information, screening and support on haemoglobinopathy in Havering; [147892]

(2) for what reason Havering council does not provide services for sickle cell and thalassaemia support groups; [147893]

(3) for what reason there is no integrated comprehensive network care for sickle cell and thalassaemia sufferers in Havering. [147898]

Mr. Hutton: It is Department of Health policy, within the framework set out in the NHS Plan and the "Shifting the Balance of Power" initiative, to devolve funding decisions to the front line. It is now for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and their local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health based on the specialised knowledge they have of the local community.

However, I understand from the North East London SHA that Havering is regarded as a priority area for introducing screening for haemoglobinopathies. Neonatal screening started across the North East London SHA from 1 September 2003 and antenatal screening is planned to start from April 2004.

I am informed by North East London SHA that sickle cell and thalassaemia services are at present provided by a specialist unit based at Newham General Hospital. The North East London sector wide network is currently considering proposals for Havering PCT to link into the Newham sickle cell and thalassaemia service, with satellite basis for local access.

There is also a support group for sickle cell and thalassaemia, based in Romford, which is part of the Sickle Cell Society, which is part funded by the local authority.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what preparations are being made for the Government's health plan on the Haemoglobinopathy Screening Programme for pregnant women and neonates; [147896]

(2) where the special designated team to implement the Haemoglobinopathy Screening Programme is based. [147899]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Local implementation of the national health service sickle cell and thalassaemia screening programme in England is being supported by a UK National Screening Committee development programme. The programme is being developed in partnership with the key community and voluntary sector stakeholders.

Key elements of the national work include developing laboratory services, standards and quality assurance, an education and training strategy for professionals and identifying and involving communities, professionals, women and their partners.

The national team supporting the NHS implementation is based at the Department of Public Health Sciences at Guy's, King's and St. Thomas' School of Medicine in London.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the Government plans to address the change in the numbers of sickle cell and thalassaemia sufferers travelling to inner London hospitals to seek medical attention. [147897]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has already started to do preliminary work on looking at services for haemoglobinopathy patients.

The Department is working with professional organisations to consider proposals for clinical networks of services to be developed allowing patients to be cared for locally. However, it will ultimately be a decision for the primary care trusts, which have discretion over where best to commission health care from national health service hospitals or other public, private or voluntary sector health care providers.

Healthcare Costs (Patient Contributions)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in poor health in England contributed to the cost of their healthcare on the last date for which figures are available. [148925]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We do not collect information on the number of people who contribute to the cost of their health care through national health service charges.

Health Forums

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much is being spent in supporting patient and public involvement at local level. [149765]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is not possible to provide this information, as individual NHS trusts and primary care trusts decide how much to invest in patient and public involvement. The Government, however, have made available £35.4 million to the Commission for Patient and Public involvement in Health for 2003–04.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes will be required to patient and public involvement in health forums established in NHS trusts which gain foundation status. [149769]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Health and Social Care (Community Standards) Act 2003 requires a patients' forum to be established for national health service foundation trusts. When a NHS trust becomes a NHS foundation trust, it is intended that the membership of the patients' forum will remain the same and the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health will notify members that they are now members of a NHS foundation trust patients' forum.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health renamed the local network providers as forum support organisations; and for what reasons the change was made. [149770]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since 1 December 2003, local network providers have been known as forum support organisations because the new name more accurately reflects their purpose of providing practical support to patients' forums.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement Forums monitors and assesses the performance of forum support organisations. [149771]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The regional centres of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health are responsible for managing the contracts placed with the forum support organisations—this includes performance management of those contracts.

Health Professionals

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many additional *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* matrons have been employed (i) in each region and (ii) in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland since (A) 1997 and (B) 2001. [148405]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the number of doctors and nurses in England, each Government Office Region and within County Durham and Tees Valley and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authorities areas for the years requested is shown in the table. Separate information is not collected centrally on the number of matrons employed in the national health service.

NHS doctors[1] by Government Office Region

England[2] — *Number (headcount)*

				Change	
	1997	*2001*	*2002*	*1997–2002*	*2001–02*
England	89,619	99,169	103,350	13,731	4,181
North East	5,033	5,656	5,823	790	167
Of which:					
County Durham and Tees Valley	2,015	2,228	2,252	237	24
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	3,018	3,428	3,571	553	143
North West	12,870	14,082	14,497	1,627	415
Yorkshire and the Number	9,057	10,075	10,601	1,544	526
East Midlands	6,691	7,162	7,343	652	181
West Midlands	8,916	9,963	10,387	1,471	424
East of England	8,329	9,125	9,590	1,261	465
London	17,107	19,048	19,872	2,765	824
South East	13,056	14,313	15,028	1,972	715
South West	8,277	9,545	10,042	1,765	497
Special Health Authorities and Other Statutory Bodies	283	200	167	-116	-33

[1] Excludes GP Retainers and medical hospital practitioners and medical clinical assistants most of whom are also GPs working part-time in hospitals.
[2] 1997 GPs data as at 1 October 1997, all other data as at 30 September.
Sources:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.
General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff, and Practice Nurses employed by UPEs[1] by Government Office Region

England[2] — *Number (headcount)*

				Change	
	1997	*2001*	*2002*	*1997–2002*	*2001–02*
England	318,856	350,381	367,520	48,664	17,139
North East	18,390	20,727	21,504	3,114	777
Of which:					
County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	7,524	8,350	8,647	1,123	297
Northumberland Tyne and Wear SHA	10,866	12,377	12,857	1,991	480
Northwest	48,903	52,507	55,989	7,086	3,482
Yorkshire and the Number	33,606	36,064	37,803	4,197	1,739
East Midlands	24,275	26,251	27,597	3,322	1,346
West Midlands	33,132	37,143	38,949	5,817	1,806
East of England	28,481	33,028	34,651	6,170	1,623
London	52,993	58,000	60,638	7,645	2,638
South East	46,702	51,202	53,397	6,695	2,195
South West	31,867	34,868	36,461	4,594	1,593
Special Health Authorities and Other Statutory Bodies	506	591	531	25	-60

[1] UPEs include GMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPs.
[2] 1997 practice nurse data as at 1 October 1997, all other data as at 30 September.
Notes:
1. Government Office Regions are based on grouped Strategic Health Authority areas.
2. 1997 and 2001 include estimated data for County Durham and Tees Valley based upon the proportioning of staff who moved from Northallerton NHS Trust.
3. Other Government Office Regions include estimated data for Trent, North West London, Cheshire and Merseyside SHA's and Special Health Authorities based on staff at Rampton, Broadmoor and Ashworth Special Hospitals.
Sources:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census.
Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Health Services (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the impact population growth will have on Chorley and South Ribble primary care trust; and what extra monies will be made available; [148214]

(2) what extra staff and funding at Chorley Hospital he plans to make available to meet population growth in Chorley; [148215]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact that population growth in Chorley will have on Chorley Hospital. [148216]

Miss Melanie Johnson: An assessment of the impact of population growth on the local health economy has been made by Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Services Trust. It is noted from population forecasts provided by local councils that the population is due to decline slowly over the 10 years from 2001. There is no perceived impact on the local health economy, including Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust (PCTs), or Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and its services across Chorley, South Ribble or Preston, and Chorley Hospital in particular.

For each round of allocations, the weighted capitation formula used to inform funding for PCTs is updated to take account of the best available measure of population from the Office for National Statistics.

Revenue allocations for PCTs covering the period 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced on 11 December 2002. There are no plans to revisit these allocations.

Any changes in population figures will be used for the next round of allocations. We will commence preparatory work on the next round of allocations early this year.

Healthy Living Centres

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1124W, on healthy living centres, what funding he is providing for centres *(a)* providing activities covering diet and nutrition and *(b)* offering physical and sporting activities. [148039]

Miss Melanie Johnson: 114 healthy living centres—167 in the United Kingdom—are providing activities covering diet and nutrition and 207 healthy living centres—282 in the UK—are offering physical and sporting activities. A substantial number of health living centres are addressing all of these: diet, nutrition and physical activity. Healthy living centres are funded through the New Opportunities Fund and do not receive any central funding from Department of Health.

Hip and Knee Replacements

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost per operation is for *(a)* hip and *(b)* knee replacements in each hospital trust; and if he will make a statement. [149007]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been placed in Library. The table contains the average unit costs (per operation) for each national health service trust in England for primary hip replacements and primary knee replacements where the operation is undertaken as an elective (planned) admission.

The data source is the Reference Costs 2002 Collection, relating to the financial year 2001–02. This is the most current data available in the public domain.

Calculation of the costs provided are based on all activity and costs associated with each procedure, regardless of the specialty in which the activity is recorded.

Hospital-acquired Infection

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of patients with MRSA bacteraemia in NHS hospitals in England died of their infection in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and what comparable figures his Department has collated regarding mortality in other countries. [147499]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on deaths from methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemias is not routinely available. Currently, mortality data can only be provided by enhanced surveillance or special studies. We do not have figures for other countries.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which members of staff and at what level of seniority will be filling the new posts of directors of infection control; [144139]

(2) how the performance of the newly created directors of infection control will be managed; and by whom; [144140]

(3) whether it is his policy that existing consultant microbiologists or infection control nurses will be redeployed to the new posts of directors of infection control. [144141]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The director of infection prevention and control is not a new post but an extra responsibility for an existing senior health professional within every organisation providing national health service services. They will:

report directly to the chief executive and the board and not through any other officer;

have the authority to challenge inappropriate clinical hygiene practice as well as antibiotic prescribing decisions;

assess the impact of all existing and new policies and plans on infection and make recommendations for change; and

be an integral member of the organisation's clinical governance and patient safety teams and structures.

We would expect consultant microbiologists and infection control nurses to be among the healthcare professionals taking on this role but designation of the new director is a local decision. However, what is important is that the individuals concerned have the appropriate expertise and authority to act to reduce infection rates.

Strategic health authorities will monitor performance against the objectives of "Winning ways" and the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection will be asked to give priority to assessing NHS performance in reducing health care associated infection.

Human Tissue Authority

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date the Retained Organs Commission will be wound up; on what date he proposes that a shadow Human Tissue Authority will be created; and what transitional arrangements he will put in place to bridge any gap between these two dates. [149379]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Human Tissue Bill, which received its second reading on 15 January 2004, sets out plans to create a Human Tissue Authority. The intention is to establish a shadow authority, in advance of the new authority, once the Bill receives Royal Assent.

The Retained Organs Commission was scheduled to close on 31 March 2003. It was extended for a further year until 31 March 2004 to enable it to complete its work.

The aims of the Commission are primarily to oversee national health service arrangements for the return of human organs and tissue and to ensure that any returns reflect families' wishes and take place promptly and sensitively. As the Commission's support to the NHS in dealing with inquiries from families will cease, it is currently engaging with trusts and strategic health authorities (SHAs) to secure the sensitive transfer of these responsibilities to them before it closes.

The Commission also issues guidance, and advises Government on the retention and use of human organs and tissue from post-mortems. It will issue final guidance to SHAs and trusts before it closes and provide a final report to Government. Any subsequent guidance in this area will be issued by the Department of Health or by the Human Tissue Authority in due course.

Independent Diagnostic and Treatment Centres

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to disclose information concerning the *(a)* financial and *(b)* clinical performance of independent diagnostic and treatment centres on the same basis as information collected and reported on direct NHS services. [148684]

Mr. Hutton: Providers of independent sector treatment centres will be paid a fixed price for the period of the contract to provide an agreed number of procedures. They will be expected to provide full activity and outcome information, as required for hospital episode statistics data. The Department has also developed a national, standardised set of performance indicators for independent sector treatment centres.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library copies of the performance standards set for the first wave of independent diagnostic and treatment centres. [148685]

Mr. Hutton: Performance standards for the first wave of independent sector treatment centres are part of the project agreement for the contract between national health service sponsors and providers. The performance standards are subject to continuing commercial negotiation and will be placed in the Library once commercial agreement has been reached on all projects.

Influenza

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 3 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 77W, on influenza, what steps have been taken to ensure there are adequate supplies of medication to treat cases of influenza. [142796]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 8 December 2003]:* Officials are in regular contact with manufacturers to monitor the quantities of antiviral medications they have in stock.

IT Contracts

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list information technology contracts in his Department above £20 million in each of the last 10 years; what the inception date for each system was; when it became fully functional; when it became fully debugged; and what the cost of over-runs has been. [146194]

Mr. Hutton: The information technology (IT) contracts let by the Department of Health and its arms length bodies in the last 10 years in excess of £20 million are shown in the table. Costs are shown as whole life costs and may, therefore, include elements of internal costs. A number of the contracts listed are IT framework contracts which National Health Service organisations can utilise to deliver IT infrastructure and software services.

Information about when NHS systems became fully debugged and the cost of over-runs is not held centrally.

	Contract	Whole life cost (£m)	Inception date	Fully functional
1994	(None awarded in 1994)			
1995	NHSNet central framework contract with BT and Cable & Wireless	129.6	1995	7–10 year contract 1996 for BT 1997 for Cable & Wireless
	Nation-Wide Clearing Service	30.0	1996	8 year contract (basic contract period of 5 years plus option to extend for 3 years).
1996	Infrastructure Management Services Framework agreement	40.0	1996	5 year contract with Fujitsu to support DH infrastructure services, with optional extension up to 7 years
1997–99	(None awarded in 1997–99)			
2000	Project Connect (formerly GPNet).	150.0	2000	6 year contract, with gradual rollout from date of contract signature in December 2000. This funding represents the cost of Wide Area Networks to connect GPs to NHSNet. In addition to this, £318 million more was committed to the provision of the necessary Local Area Networks within each GP practice. However, as this effectively involved one contract per practice, all of this money was committed in small contracts.
	Clinical Messaging	50.0	2000	7 year contract. Gradual rollout from 2000.
	NHS Direct—Clinical Decision Support Software	22.3	2000	7 year contract. The level of cash-releasing benefits means that the contract pays for itself.
2001	Microsoft software enterprise agreement	138.6	2001	3 year contract. This is a software purchase contract
	Electronic Staff Record	325.0	2001	10 year contract. Gradual rollout from 2001
2002	Shared Services Centres two pilot centres	21.0	2002	2 year contract
	NHSNet purchase of additional bandwidth	96.5	2002	5 year contract. Gradual rollout from 2002
	Email and directory services	326.2	2002	10 year contract. System scheduled to be completely rolled out by March 2003
	Dental Practice Board—reprocurement of IT systems	40.0	2003	Two related contracts, both running for 7 years—one with IBM (£31. 9m) and one with Astron (formerly Hays) (8. 1m)
	Infrastructure Management Services Framework Agreement	60	2002	7 year contract with CSC to support DH IT infrastructure services, with optional extension up to 10 years.
2003	NHS Direct intelligent phones	29.7	2003	6 year contract
	National Programme: National Electronic Booking System	64.5 (core services)	October 2003	5 year contract. National rollout complete 2005. Options exist for extensions to contract length and range of services provided.
	National Programme: NHS Care Record Service (NCRS) "data spine"	620	December 2003	9 year contract plus one year optional extension.
	National Programme: NCRS, London Cluster	996 (core services)	December 2003	9 year contract plus one year optional extension.
	National Programme: NCRS, North East Cluster	1,099 (core services)	December 2003	9 year contract plus one year optional extension.
	National Programme: NCRS, North West and West Midlands Cluster	973 (core services)	December 2003	9 year contract plus one year optional extension
	National Programme: NCRS, Eastern Cluster	934 (core services)	December 2003	9 year contract plus one year optional extension
2004	National Programme: NCRS, South Cluster		Contract yet to be signed	
	National Programme: New National Network (N3) infrastructure		Contract yet to be signed	

Lancashire Ambulance Service

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times ambulance services had 999 calls passed to them by BT operators who were unable to connect the call to the Lancashire Ambulance Service in the last 12 months. [148375]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not held centrally.

Medical Records

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance was available in the *(a)* 1970s and *(b)* 1980s in respect of routine recording of myodil injections on medical records; and if he will make a statement. [148778]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We are unaware of any specific guidance available in the 1970s or 1980s on the routine recording of Myodil injections on medical records.

Memory Clinics

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he collates on access to memory clinics in England. [150150]

Dr. Ladyman: No information is collected centrally on access to memory clinics.

Meningitis

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made towards the introduction of a meningitis B vaccine. [148274]

Miss Melanie Johnson: No vaccine is yet available to protect against meningitis B. However, a number of candidate vaccines are being developed. The Health Protection Agency is working closely with manufacturers to ensure the prompt evaluation of the candidate vaccines as they become available. We are also monitoring developments in this area abroad.

Sensory Impairment

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people aged 65 years and over who suffer from sensory impairment, broken down by sense. [149790]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department collects statistics on the numbers of people in England who are registered with councils as blind, partially sighted, deaf and hard of hearing. The numbers of people over 65 years so registered, as at 31 March 2003, were: blind—121,115; partially sighted—22,165; deaf—19,030, hard of hearing—116,070. Registration is voluntary.

Mental Health

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many care homes are registered as catering for the needs of the elderly mentally infirm. [149791]

Dr. Ladyman: Data on the number of care homes that are registered as catering for the needs of the elderly mentally infirm are not centrally available. The available information is shown in the table.

Figures for later years have been collected by the National Care Standards Commission, but comparable details are not available.

Table: Number of care homes primarily for people with mental illness—England at 31 March 2001

	Residential[1]	*Nursing*[2]
18 and over	3,050	820
Of which:		
65 and over	1,130	[3]

[1] Includes dual registered homes
[2] Excludes dual registered homes
[3] Not available
Source:
DH forms RA and RH(N)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of prisoners with severe mental illness have a care plan. [150045]

Dr. Ladyman: National health service mental health in-reach teams will be in place in some 90 prisons in England by March 2004, covering those establishments where mental health need is greatest. Our expectation is that where such teams are fully operational, care plans will have been drawn up for all prisoners with severe mental illness.

NHS Direct

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what statistics he has collated on the use of NHS Direct in Lancashire, broken down by constituency. [149939]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The statistics collated by NHS Direct North West Coast for the last six months—1 July to 31 December 2003—broken down by constituencies, are shown in the table.

Constituency	*Number of calls*
Blackburn	31,632
Blackpool	6,343
Burnley	4,473
Chorley	1,151
Darwen	4,096
Hyndburn	7,487
Lancaster and Wyre	4,181
Morecambe and Lunesdale	1,321
Preston	18,289
Ribble Valley	1,120
Total	80,093

NHS Pay (Leeds)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female NHS employees in Leeds are paid (i) below £5,000, (ii) £5,001-£10,000, (iii) £10,001-£12,500, (iv) £12,501-£15,000, (v) £15,001-£17,500, (vi) £17,501-£20,000, (vii) £20,001-£22,500, (viii) £22,501-£25,000, (ix) £25,001-£27,500, (x) £27,501-£30,000, (xi) £30,001-£35,000, (xii) £35,001-£40,000, (xiii) £40,001-£45,000, (xiv) £45,001-£50,000, (xv) £50,001-£60,000, (xvi) £60,001-£70,000, (xvii) £70,001-£80,000, (xviii) £80,001-£90,000, (xix) £90,001-£100,000, (xx) £100,001-£150,000, (xxi) £150,001-£200,000 and (xxii) above £200,000. [149033]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not held centrally.

NICE Guidance (Pregnancy)

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the National Institute for Clinical Excellence will publish guidance on managing problems in early pregnancy; and if he will make a statement. [149302]

Dr. Ladyman: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published a clinical guideline entitled, "Ante-Natal Care: routine care for the healthy pregnant woman", on 22 October 2003. Full details of this guideline are available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk.

Nurses

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 467W, how many public health nurses there were in the NHS in each of the last 10 years. [148910]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* Workforce information currently collected by the Department does not identify either school nurses or communicable disease control nurses, two of the main groups of public health nurses. Health visitors are the only public health nurses separately identified in the non-medical workforce census. The following table shows the number of health visitors employed in the national health service since 1992.

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified health visitors in England as at 30 September each specified year

	Headcount
1992	12,038
1993	12,059
1994	11,548
1995	12,079
1996	12,350
1997	12,410
1998	12,572
1999	12,800

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified health visitors in England as at 30 September each specified year

	Headcount
2000	12,827
2001	13,053
2002	12,774

Notes:
1. A new classification of the non-medical workforce was introduced in 1995.
2. Information based on this classification is not directly comparable with earlier years.

Source:
Department of Health Non-medical Workforce Census

Obesity

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding he has provided for *(a)* the Weight Wise website and *(b)* Weight Concern's toolkit on obesity. [147931]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department of Health has provided £66,700 over two years to the British Dietetic Association for the development of the Weight Wise website. The website went live on 3 December 2003 and is designed to be used by both health professionals and members of the public.

Funding of £130,000 over three years was provided for Weight Concern's toolkit on obesity. The funding was used to recruit experts in psychology, nutrition and exercise to develop materials, create a workbook to assist individuals and professionals managing obesity, and carry out a preliminary evaluation.

Funding for both these pieces of work was provided through the Department's Section 64 grant scheme.

Operation Telic

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of military personnel serving in Operation Telic who have returned from Iraq have since received treatment for mental health problems; [147744]

(2) of those who suffered from mental health problems after participating in Operation Telic, how many suffered from and were treated for *(a)* depression, *(b)* post-traumatic stress disorder, *(c)* Gulf War Syndrome, *(d)* panic disorder, *(e)* anxiety disorder and *(f)* motor neurone disease; [147746]

(3) of those who suffered from mental illness on returning from Operation Telic, how many were treated *(a)* by the NHS and *(b)* privately. [147747]

Mr. Caplin: I have been asked to reply.

This information is currently being collated. I expect to be able to write to the hon. Gentlemen shortly and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Pain Management Clinic (Guys and St. Thomas')

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that the waiting list for access to the INPUT pain management clinic at Guys and St. Thomas's hospital is reduced; and when he will respond to the letter from Mrs. Jackson of Christchurch dated 5 December 2003 on this subject. [150536]

Mr. Hutton: Officials responded to Mrs. Jackson's letter of 5 December 2003 regarding the INPUT pain clinic on the 13 January 2004.

I am assured by Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospitals National Health Service Trust that they have taken steps to reduce waiting times for the INPUT pain clinic:

Extra clinic sessions have been added.

All referrals have to be validated by the consultant.

The non-general practitioner referral waiting list is currently being validated to ensure that patients still wish to attend for assessment.

Improvements in the administration system mean it now provides better information about clinic slot availability and facilitates the offer of vacant slots to non-GP referral patients.

Staff are now able to compile reports in order to manage clinics more effectively.

A review of the systems for sending out-patient appointments has taken place and a reminder system will be introduced to minimise the number of appointment slots, which might otherwise be wasted if patients did not attend.

To increase psychologist out-patient capacity, the weekly timetable for all psychologists is currently being reviewed, in order to identify how their workloads can be altered to allow more outpatient assessment time.

The trust also plans to employ a service improvement facilitator to help improve the service provided by the clinic.

Practice Staff (Complaints)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations his Department has received about the treatment of practice staff by general practitioners; what the complaints procedure is in the event of staff concerns; and if he will make a statement. [144940]

Mr. Hutton: General practitioners are independent contractors to the national health service. They are responsible for employing their own staff, and for agreeing their terms and conditions of employment. Practice staff, like all other employees, have statutory employment rights which are enforceable by the employment tribunal.

Public Health

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the public health content of strategic health authority local development plans; and if he will make a statement. [144784]

Mr. Hutton: Strategic health authorities were required to produce local delivery plans to deliver the national priorities set out in "Improvement, Expansion and Reform: The next three years: Priorities and Planning Framework (PPF) 2003–2006." A copy is available in the Library.

The plans cover a whole range of areas—improvements to cancer services; tackling coronary heart disease; reducing health inequalities and improving access to services—which will improve the public's health.

Public Health Laboratory Service

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the funding for the Public Health Laboratory Service was in each year from its establishment until 1996–97. [147658]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The funding for the Public Health Laboratory Service is described in its annual report and accounts, copies of which are available in the Library.

Stroke (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what facilities there are in the NHS in Gloucestershire to identify those most at risk from strokes; and if he will make a statement. [149468]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with our policy of Shifting the Balance of Power, it is now for primary care trusts, in partnership with health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services, based on the specialised knowledge they have of the local community.

I am informed by Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority that the National Health Service in Gloucestershire is involved in a wide range of prevention programmes, including exercise and diet, linked to health promotion. There is regular screening in primary and secondary care for example for high blood pressure, smoking and other familial factors with prescribing where appropriate. The NHS in Gloucestershire also participates in audits to monitor and improve practice in general practitioner surgeries and hospitals.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what NHS services are offered to stroke victims in their homes; and if he will make a statement. [149469]

Dr. Ladyman: People who have experienced a stroke for the first time should be admitted to hospital for immediate assessment and to plan for their rehabilitation. Many stroke units are now developing early discharge schemes to help some people (usually those with satisfactory domestic caring arrangements) to return home at an early opportunity to continue rehabilitation at home for a few more weeks. Most disabled stroke patients who are discharged from hospital at any stage of their care will benefit from a period of post-discharge rehabilitation. This has been shown to stabilise the patient's function and make a small additional improvement in independence. During the period following discharge, there will also commonly be contact with mainstream health and social care community services. These will include: the patient's general practitioner; community nurses; and the home care service. These contacts often continue long-term for patients with persisting disability. The national service framework for older people has stipulated that stroke patients should have a review, performed by a stroke co-ordinator six months after discharge, to reassess their care needs.

Waiting Times

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cancer patients waited longer than two months between urgent general practitioner referral and first treatment in each of the last eight years. [149918]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The data requested are not available centrally.

The NHS Cancer Plan sets out our strategy to reduce waiting times for cancer patients. A maximum two month wait from urgent referral to treatment was introduced for breast cancer in December 2002. Data on performance of this target has been reported from the first quarter of 2003–04 and is shown in the table.

	Quarter	
	Qtr 1 (April-June 2003)	*Qtr 2 (July-September 2003)*
Number of patients treated for breast cancer within two months of urgent referral by their GP	3,844	4,047
Percentage of breast cancer patients treated within two months of urgent referral by their GP	96.8	97.8
Number of patients treated for breast cancer during the quarter but not within two months of urgent referral by their GP	127	91

By 2005, all cancer patients will receive their first treatment within two months of urgent referral for suspected cancer by their general practitioner, except for a good clinical reason or through patient choice. Targets of one month from urgent referral for suspected cancer to the start of treatment were introduced in 2001 for testicular cancer, acute leukaemia and children's' cancers. Data on achievement of NHS Cancer Plan waiting times targets are published on the Department's website or strategic health authorities and trusts, at www.doh.gov.uk/cancerwaits.

Working Time Directive

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new medical posts NHS hospital trusts have bid for to help respond to the EU Working Time Directive. [149341]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not available centrally.

Strategic health authorities are currently working with their respective trusts locally on plans to achieve compliance for doctors in training from August 2004.

HOME

Infanticide

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men are in prison having been convicted of causing the deaths of their own children; [145030]

(2) how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men have been convicted in each of the last 10 years for causing the deaths of their own children. [145031]

Paul Goggins: Available information is in the form of all suspects convicted of homicide by type of homicide and sentence. The latest 10 years data were published in "Criminal Statistics England and Wales 2001–2002: Supplementary Volume", Table 1.10.

Data for suspects causing the deaths of their own children are not published separately.

Animal Experiments

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the minister responsible for animal experimentation takes to secure advice on these matters from sources independent of officials. [148849]

Caroline Flint: Under sections 9(1) and 18(2) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, members of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate provide the Secretary of State with expert technical advice about whether and on what terms applications for licences and certificates should be granted, and on their review, amendment or variation. The Inspectorate is the only source of such advice considered necessary in dealing with most applications for project licences, personal licences and certificates of designation. The Inspectorate has no powers to grant, refuse, revoke or vary licences or certificates. That responsibility lies with the Secretary of State.

Where issues arising from project licence applications prompt the Secretary of State to seek advice from other experts, the 1986 Act makes provision, under section 9(1), for the appointment of independent assessors. This option is seldom used, but may be exercised in a variety of circumstances. For example, advice may be sought when the issues raised require specific, expert knowledge not available within the Inspectorate. It may also be appropriate when there is debate within the scientific or welfare communities, or between the Inspectorate and an applicant, as to the scientific validity of the hypothesis or methodology; the scope for further refinement of the programme of work; the benefits likely to arise from a programme of work; or the welfare costs to the animals.

Section 12 of the Act defines the actions to be taken by the Secretary of State when it is proposed to refuse an application for authorities under the Act, or to vary or revoke existing authorities other than with the consent of the holder of the licence or certificate. In such circumstances, the Act allows the appointment of a person of suitable legal qualification to consider any representations against such proposals and to report the outcome to the Secretary of State..

Sections 19 and 20 of the 1986 Act establish the Animal Procedures Committee, an independent body created to advise the Secretary of State on matters concerned with the Act and the Secretary of State's powers under it. The Committee may consider and advise on matters of its own choosing, as well as those that are referred to it by the Secretary of State. In its considerations, the Committee must have regard both to the legitimate requirements of science and industry and to the protection of animals against avoidable suffering and unnecessary use in scientific procedures. The Committee regularly publishes general advice to Ministers, most recently in its reports on the use of non-human primates and on the cost benefit assessment, and also offers additional advice on the limited range of project licence applications referred to it.

The Secretary of State is not bound by the advice received from the Inspectorate, assessors, persons appointed to consider representations, or the Animal Procedures Committee, in respect of licence applications. Such advice only informs the Secretary of State's decision.

More generally, as the Home Office Minister responsible for the implementation of the 1986 Act, I regularly meet representatives of the scientific community and animal welfare and animal protection groups, as well as Ministerial colleagues in other Government Departments and Members of Parliament, to discuss policy relating to the use of animals in scientific procedures. I also receive correspondence and a variety of reports and written representations from these and other sources on the use of animals in scientific procedures.

Anti-drugs Strategy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made towards the 10-year anti-drugs strategy targets of *(a)* halving the number of young people using Class A drugs, *(b)* halving the availability of Class A drugs, *(c)* doubling the number of drug misusers in treatment and *(d)* halving the levels of re-offending by drug-misusing offenders. [149865]

Caroline Flint: The Updated Drug Strategy published in December 2002 sets out revised targets aimed at reducing the harm caused by drug misuse to society communities, individuals and their families.

The current Drug Strategy targets are as follows:

Reduce the use of Class A drugs and the frequent use of any illicit drug among all young people under the age of 25 especially by the most vulnerable young people;

Reduce the availability of illegal drugs by increasing the proportion of heroin and cocaine target on the UK which is taken out;

the disruption/dismantling of those criminal groups responsible for supplying substantial quantities of Class A drugs to the UK market;

the recovery of drug-related criminal assets;

contribute to the reduction of opium production in Afghanistan, with poppy cultivation reduced by 70 per cent. within five years and elimination within 10 years;

reduce drug-related crime, including as measured by the proportion of offenders testing positive at arrest;

increase the participation of problem drug users in drug treatment programmes by 55 per cent. by 2004 and by 100 per cent. by 2008. And increase year on year the proportion of users successfully sustaining or completing treatment programmes.

Information on progress against these targets is available as follows:

The Home Office Annual report 2002–03 published in May 2003 provides details of progress against each of the drug strategy targets.

In addition, the Home Office Autumn report published in December 2003 provides an update on the young people and drug related crime targets. Both of these documents are in the Library and on the Home Office website.

Recent information on the number of drug users receiving treatment was announced on 11 December 2003 and is available in the Library and on the Department of Health's website.

Recent information on progress to reduce the availability of drugs which cause the most harm is available on Her Majesty's Custom & Excise website. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office website provides an update on the progress of poppy eradication in Afghanistan.

Asylum Seekers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people aged under 18 have been returned to their families in their countries of origin in each of the last three years. [144992]

Beverley Hughes: Information on the ages of those people removed from the United Kingdom is not collated centrally and would only be available by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

Although statistics of the removal of failed asylum seekers include unaccompanied minors; they are not separately identified. However, as a matter of policy, unaccompanied children are not removed under Immigration Act powers unless we are satisfied that suitable arrangements have been made for their reception and care in the destination country.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much benefit was paid to asylum seekers living in the United Kingdom in 2003. [148953]

Beverley Hughes: The budget for asylum support costs for 2002–03 is £1,067 million. The actual outturn will be published in the audited resource accounts for the Home Office.

Young Offender Institutions

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times control and restraint have been used on children in *(a)* Stoke Heath, *(b)* Huntercombe and *(b)* Castington Young Offender Institutions in each of the last 12 months. [144355]

Paul Goggins: Information on the use of control and restraint was not recorded centrally until the beginning of last year. The data for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 November 2003, in Stoke Heath, Huntercombe and Castington Young Offender Institutions is set out in the table.

	Stoke Heath	*Huntercombe*	*Castington*
January	16	28	24
February	11	32	7
March	4	33	18
April	14	26	15
May	7	12	22
June	9	18	27
July	11	26	32
August	8	31	18
September	9	38	34
October	7	23	17
November	4	27	14

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were held on the basic level of incentives and earned privileges scheme in *(a)* Stoke Heath, *(b)* Huntercombe and *(b)* Castington Young Offender Institutions in September. [144356]

Paul Goggins: Data on the number of children held at each level under the rewards and sanctions scheme (formerly known as incentives and earned privileges scheme), including those on basic, for September 2003, is set out in the table.

Establishment	*Basic*	*Standard*	*Enhanced*
Stoke Heath	12	133	27
Huntercombe	13	210	95
Castington	13	175	41

Cleveland Coroner

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inquests were outstanding in the jurisdiction of the Cleveland Coroner in *(a)* July, *(b)* August, *(c)* September and *(d)* October 2003. [147649]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 January 2003]:* The number of inquests in the jurisdiction of the Cleveland coroner which were outstanding at the end of July, August, September and October 2003 respectively is shown in the table.

	Inquests outstanding at date
31 July 2003	273
31 August 2003	268
30 September 2003	261
31 October 2003	245
30 November 2003	238

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inquests in the jurisdiction of the Cleveland Coroner were heard in *(a)* August, *(b)* September and *(c)* October 2003 by the (i) coroner, (ii) deputy coroner and (iii) assistant deputy coroner. [147650]

Paul Goggins: The number of inquests heard by the Cleveland coroner and his deputies in the months of August, September, October and November 2003 respectively is shown in the table.

	Inquests heard by:		
	Coroner	Deputy coroner	Assistant Deputy Coroner
August 2003	20	2	3
September 2003	23	1	6
October 2003	22	7	6
November 2003	19	11	3

The figures include all inquests concluded in the relevant months (i.e. a verdict was delivered, or the coroner (or deputies) declared that the inquest was not to be resumed after a Secton 16 adjournment).

Community Justice Centre

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his timetable is for the establishment of the pilot community justice centre announced on 10th September. [143407]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs and Crown Prosecution Service are working together to develop the first pilot Community Justice Centre in the United Kingdom, which is to be located in Liverpool. Our current timetable is for the Centre to be operational by the end of 2004. This will be conditional on a number of factors, including the identification of an appropriate site to accommodate the Centre and ensure it is fit for purpose. We also want to develop the Centre with the full engagement of the local community. From early 2004 a local community needs assessment will be undertaken which will feed into the design of the Centre and into community sentence planning and community work. From April 2004 these community projects which will be run in conjunction with the Centre.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department where in Liverpool the pilot community justice centre will be located. [146311]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs and Crown Prosecution Service are working together to develop the first pilot Community Justice Centre in the United Kingdom, which is to be located in Liverpool. The area of the city that the Community Justice Centre will be located is in the Liverpool north. This part of the city has experienced the problems that the Justice Centre will aim to tackle, such as anti-social behaviour and low-level criminal activity, but maintains a strong sense of community spirit and pride that the Justice Centre can build on and enhance.

Agents, with experience of developing court buildings, are working with Liverpool City Council to locate suitable sites for the Justice Centre in this part of the city. The site will accommodate a building housing a multi-jurisdictional court room as well as criminal justice and other agencies to provide on-site services for offenders, victims and the wider community. The exact location of the Liverpool Community Justice Centre is due to be announced later this year to ensure that the Justice Centre can commence operations at the end of 2004.

Corporate Manslaughter

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish *(a)* the draft Corporate Manslaughter Bill and *(b)* the legislative timetable for the Bill; and if he will make a statement. [140793]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 1 December 2003]*: The Government are committed to reforming the law on corporate manslaughter. We intend to publish our proposals for legislation in the near future, followed by a draft Bill in the spring.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he will reply to the letter to him dated 23 November 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to E. Elbasani; [147611]

(2) when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 13 November 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. E. Elbasani. [149549]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 23 January 2004.

Crime Reduction Initiatives

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action is being taken to reduce and tackle persistent offending through targeting *(a)* prolific offenders and *(b)* improving security; where such schemes and projects are being trialled; and how and when such initiatives will be introduced in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland, East. [144756]

Paul Goggins: The national Persistent Offender Scheme was launched in April 2003. It is a component of Local Criminal Justice Boards' action plans to increase the number of offences brought to justice, aimed at targeting a small group of prolific offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime. Areas have devised their own 'premium service' protocols which include elements of proactive policing, improved investigation and case management, priority court listings, and strategies for rehabilitation.

The National Probation Service is piloting 15 Intensive Supervision and Monitoring Schemes (ISMSs) for persistent offenders in local probation/police areas. All Schemes involve joint working between probation and police. In addition, some Schemes are testing mechanisms for involving the prison service in pre-release work with persistent offenders. ISMSs target the most prolific offenders in a locality, based on police intelligence. They provide intensive surveillance and supervision of offenders, offering fast access to services and support for rehabilitation, alongside swift action and penalties for non-compliance. They involve other partner agencies such as providers of housing, education and training, alcohol and drug abuse treatment groups and employment services.

In addition, the Government has given the courts new secure remand and tagging powers for 12- to 16-year olds who repeatedly offend on bail, funded the Youth Justice Board'sIntensive Supervision and Surveillance

Programmes for the most prolific young offenders and renewed its commitment to maintain the time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders at or below 71 days.

The following local schemes cover the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency:

Intensive Supervision and Monitoring Scheme for adult offenders (Police/Probation).

Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes for young offenders (Youth Offending Teams).

Both schemes operate throughout Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland.

Criminal Justice Intervention Programme (CJIP)—there is an existing scheme operating in Middlesbrough, and Redcar and Cleveland will benefit from the CJIP funding being made available to all parts of the country.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to formulate a definition of a crime of violence in relation to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. [146281]

Paul Goggins: None. The Scheme has functioned effectively since its inception in 1964 without the need to define what is meant by such terms as 'criminal injury' or 'crime of violence'. Any detailed definition runs the risk of being too prescriptive and excluding borderline cases where discretion might reasonably be exercised. There would also be the risk of failing to include sufficient scope to accommodate changes in the nature of crime, such as deliberately infecting someone with Aids, or stalking. We consider that in its present form the Scheme strikes an appropriate balance between breath of scope and necessary clarification.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government is taking to ensure the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme does not deem physical violence to be an essential component of a sexual offence. [146282]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme already recognises that physical violence is not an essential component of sexual offences by making provision (at paragraph 9 of the 2001 Scheme) for compensation to be paid where such offences have caused mental injury alone.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme deals with the role of grooming as a tactic of abusers. [146283]

Paul Goggins: In considering applications for compensation submitted in respect of alleged abuse of children, claims officers of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority take account of any available evidence of grooming and/or abuse of power when they decide whether an applicant was able to give and actually gave informed consent to what took place.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been conducted on the suitability of trusts as a means for victims to retain their eligibility for benefits after a compensation pay-out; and if he will make a statement. [146285]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has conducted no such research, nor is any planned.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will accept the recommendations of Victim Support in their report Insult to Injury. [146286]

Paul Goggins: We have issued a consultation paper inviting views on ways in which the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme might be changed to release resources for wider victims' programmes. Victim Support has been consulted about the developing proposals. We will consider their report's recommendations, and any further comments they wish to offer.

Criminal Justice Interventions Programme

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the role of the Criminal Justice Interventions Programme in addressing drug-misusing offenders. [148428]

Caroline Flint: The Criminal Justice Interventions Programme (CJIP) is a programme of measures designed to help drug misusing offenders reduce their offending behaviour by accessing drug treatment. The programme includes enhanced arrest referral, drug testing on charge and a range of initiatives to improve treatment needs of offenders while serving their sentence. CJIP also encourages the positive reintegration into society of drug misusers after they have left the judicial system.

CJIP rolled out on April 2003 and will expand its coverage from April 2004.

Criminal Justice System

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research is planned on disabled children and young people's *(a)* access to and *(b)* experience of the criminal justice system. [146291]

Paul Goggins: There is no specific research planned on disabled children's and young people's access to the criminal justice system. However work is under way with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to ensure that the criminal justice system is adequately covered in the Citizenship section of the National Curriculum. As part of this we will ensure that disabled children have the same opportunities to learn about and experience the criminal justice system as other children.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to improve the efficiency of the criminal justice system. [146670]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Crown Prosecution Service share a Criminal Justice System tri-lateral Public Service Agreement target to increase value for money from the Criminal Justice System by 3 per cent. a year. The technical note for how this target will be achieved was published and announced in the House in July 2003.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list, broken down by Act, the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department in session 2002–03. [143273]

Paul Goggins: The following offences have been created, modified or re-enacted by the Sexual Offences Act 2003:

section 1: Rape

section 2: Assault by penetration

section 3: Sexual assault

section 4: Causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent

section 5: Rape of a child under 13

section 6: Assault of a child under 13 by penetration

section 7: Sexual assault of a child under 13

section 8: Causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity

section 9: Sexual activity with a child

section 10: Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity

section 11: Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child

section 12: Causing a child to watch a sexual act

section 13: Child sex offences committed by children or young persons

section 14: Arranging or facilitation commission of a child sex offence

section 15: Meeting a child following sexual grooming etc

section 16: Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity with a child

section 17: Abuse of position of trust: causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity

section 18: Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity in the presence of a child

section 19: Abuse of position of trust: causing a child to watch a sexual act

section 25: Sexual activity with a child family member

section 26: Inciting a child family member to engage in sexual activity

section 30: Sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder impeding choice

section 31: Causing or inciting a person with a mental disorder impeding choice to engage in sexual activity

section 32: Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a person with a mental disorder impeding choice

section 33: Causing a person, with a mental disorder impeding choice, to watch a sexual act

section 34: Inducement, threat or deception to procure sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder

section 35: Causing a person with a mental disorder to engage in or agree to engage in sexual activity by inducement, threat or deception

section 36: Engaging in sexual activity in the presence, procured by inducement, threat or deception, of a person with a mental disorder

section 37: Causing a person with a mental disorder to watch a sexual act by inducement, threat or deception

section 38: Care workers: sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder

section 39: Care workers: causing or inciting sexual activity

section 40: Care workers: sexual activity in the presence of a person with a mental disorder

section 41: Care workers: causing a person with a mental disorder to watch a sexual act

section 45: Indecent photographs of persons aged 16 or 17

section 46: Criminal proceedings, investigations, etc

section 47: Paying for sexual services of a child

section 48: Causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography

section 49: Controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography

section 50: Arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography

section 52: Causing or inciting prostitution for gain

section 53: Controlling prostitution for gain

section 55: Penalties for keeping a brothel used for prostitution

section 56: Extension of gender-specific prostitution offences

section 57: Trafficking into the UK for sexual exploitation

section 58: Trafficking within the UK for sexual exploitation

section 59: Trafficking out of the UK for sexual exploitation

section 61: Administering a substance with intent

section 62: Committing an offence with intent to commit a sexual offence

section 63: Trespass with intent to commit a sexual offence

section 64: Sex with an adult relative: penetration

section 65: Sex with an adult relative: consenting to penetration

section 66: Exposure

section 67: Voyeurism

section 69: Intercourse with an animal

section 70: Sexual penetration of a corpse

section 71: Sexual activity in a public lavatory

section 72: Offences outside the United Kingdom—extension of jurisdiction

section 91: Offences relating to notification (breach of the notification requirements)

section 113: Breach of sexual offences prevention order or interim sexual offences prevention order

section 122: Breach of foreign travel order

section 128: Breach of risk of sexual harm order or interim risk of sexual harm order.

Under section 81 of the Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003 it is now an offence to obstruct a person carrying out an inspection of the Schengen Information System, the Europol Information System or the Customs Information System. Section 88 of the Act extends the scope of section 5 of the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981 so it will also apply to the forgery of bankers drafts, promissory notes and debit cards.

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 creates a number of new offences. Under section 4 of the Act (closure of premises where drugs are used unlawfully) a person commits an offence if he remains on or enters premises in contravention of a closure notice. A person also commits an offence if:

(a) He obstructs a constable or authorised person acting under section 1(6) (service of a closure notice) or section 3(2) (entering the premises or doing anything reasonably necessary to secure the premises against entry).

(b) He remains on premises in respect of which a closure order has been made.

(c) He enters the premises.

Under section 32 (Dispersal of groups) a person who knowingly contravenes a direction given to him under section 30(4) (to disperse, to leave the relevant locality or prohibiting a return to the relevant locality) commits an offence.

Under section 37 it is an offence to carry an air weapon (whether loaded or not) or an imitation firearm in a public place without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.

Under section 38 it is an offence for a person under the age of 17 to have with him an air weapon or ammunition for an air weapon.

Under section 38 it is an offence for a 14 to 16-year-old to fire an air weapon beyond the boundary of private land under the circumstances where he has the permission of the occupier to shoot unsupervised.

Under section 39 it is an offence for a person to possess, purchase or acquire, or manufacture, sell or transfer any air rifle, air gun or air pistol which uses, or is designed or adapted for use with, a self-contained gas cartridge system. If at the time that this provision comes into force, a person has such an air rifle, air gun or air pistol in his possession, he will not be prevented from continued possession, but it will be an offence for him to continue possession without a licence.

Under section 40 a person commits an offence if without reasonable excuse he permits premises to be open in contravention of a closure order issued because a public nuisance is being caused by noise coming from the premises.

Under section 54 a person commits an offence if he sells an aerosol paint container to a person under the age of 16.

Under section 58 a person commits an offence if he knows that a direction under section 63(2) of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 has been given which applies to him and he makes preparations for or attends a rave within 24 hours of the direction being given.

Under section 61 a person commits an offence if he knows that a direction under section 62A of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 has been given which applies to him and he fails to leave the land as soon as reasonably practicable, or if, within three months of the direction being given, he enters any land in the area of the relevant local authority as a trespasser with the intention of residing there.

Under section 75 a person commits an offence if he fails to comply with a remedial notice to take action in relation to a high hedge.

Under section 77 a person commits an offence if he intentionally obstructs a person exercising the powers to enter the neighbouring land in order to carry out their functions under the Act.

As a result of legislation introduced by private members, the following offences were enacted in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003:

section 1: Offence of female genital mutilation

section 2: Offence of assisting a girl to mutilate her own genitalia

section 3: Offence of assisting a non-UK person to mutilate overseas a girl's genitalia

section 4: Extension of sections 1–3 to extra-territorial acts.

Sections 1 and 2 of the 2003 Act re-enact existing offences under the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985. Sections 3 and 4 introduce new offences.

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to allow the Crown Prosecution Service to have early access to police files to assist case preparation. [144016]

Paul Goggins: Following successful pilots of the Auld recommendation to increase the role of crown prosecutors in charging decisions, measures to put this on a statutory footing have been enacted in the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The relevant provisions will be brought into effect in April 2004, and the new arrangements will then be implemented on an area-by-area basis.

In preparation for that implementation, Crown Prosecution Service areas and their police partners are establishing shadow charging arrangements in each area. This will provide an infrastructure of duty prosecutors working in police operational units to provide on-the-spot advice to investigators, to be available for early consultation in investigations, and to make charging decisions in a wide range of cases.

Early guidance will focus on the lines of enquiry to be pursued in individual cases, the likely charges to be preferred and the evidential requirements to support these. Guidance will also be given on the case preparation requirements in each individual case.

Charging decisions will be made by crown prosecutors following a review of all the available evidence in each case. Where the evidence presented by an officer is insufficient for the charging decision to be made at that time, further guidance will be given on continuing case preparation and evidential requirements.

Curfew Orders

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length was of *(a)* an electronically monitored curfew order and *(b)* a home detention curfew in financial year 2002–03. [143411]

Paul Goggins: In the financial year 2002–03 the average length of an electronically monitored curfew order was 95 days, and the average length of a home detention curfew was 52 days.

Departmental Leaflets

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria his Department uses when deciding whether a leaflet which it publishes is to be made available only on its website. [149559]

Fiona Mactaggart: The decision process to make information available only on the Home Office website is as follows:

The target audience for every publication is ascertained at the initial planning stage of each project.

If, after investigation, it is the case that the most cost-effective and efficient method of disseminating the information is by way of the website then that method would be employed. The approved information will also be sent for Legal Deposit in compliance with the Legal Deposit Act 2003 extension covering non-printed materials.

Informability aspects are also considered at this initial stage, therefore the document may appear in additional formats such as the Welsh or ethnic minority languages or in formats for people with disabilities.

Departmental Press Releases

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many press releases were issued by his Department in 2003. [148508]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 19 January 2004]*: The number of press releases issued by the Home Office in 2003 was as follows:

	Number of press releases
Home Office	374
Prison Service	43
Criminal Justice Service	13
Prisons Inspectorate	68
Probation Inspectorate	11
Police Inspectorate	3
Advisory Council on Misuse of Drugs	1
Animal Procedures Committee	2
Assets Recovery Agency	1
Compact Working Group	1
UK Passport Service	3
Total	520

Detention and Training Orders

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the early release scheme for detention and training orders issued since 2001. [145648]

Paul Goggins: The Youth Justice Board (YJB) commissioned an internal study from PA Consulting on the factors inhibiting or assisting the take up of early release.

PA's report, in September 2003, found that establishments generally saw early release as a useful incentive to influence the behaviour of trainees serving terms of eight months or more. Where early release was not granted, the main reasons were decisions by review meetings that trainees were unsuitable; lack of appropriate accommodation for them to go to; and young people's refusal of early release. PA recommended monitoring the reasons for decisions not to agree early release; investigating ways of improving the availability of suitable accommodation; and developing a system to record centrally the outcomes of early release decisions. The YJB are pursuing these recommendations.

Discharged Cases

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many defendants in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* each of the last four years have been discharged due to delays in gathering evidence, pressure of work and errors on the part of the (i) police and (ii) Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will make a statement. [143964]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office does not keep any data on the reasons for discharges and the Crown Prosecution Service holds no central records of reasons for the outcome of proceedings. The Crown Prosecution keeps data on the number of unsuccessful outcomes (finalisations other than a conviction) for magistrates and crown courts, and the stage at which the outcome was unsuccessful.

The proportion of total magistrates court outcomes that were unsuccessful as a result of being-discontinued or bound over; write off; discharged committals; dismissal no case; or dismissals after trial was 22.0 per cent. for 2003 (to September). The corresponding figure was 23.4 per cent. in 2002, 23.5 per cent. in 2001, 23.5 per cent. in 2000, and 23.1 per cent. in 1999.

The implementation of the compass case management system will enable a full record of the reason for all unsuccessful outcomes in magistrates courts and in the crown court to be provided.

Drug or Alcohol Treatment

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time was between the referral by courts of individuals with criminal convictions for drug or alcohol treatment and the commencement of their treatment programmes in each of the last five years. [146539]

Paul Goggins: Information relating to the national average waiting time to access drug or alcohol treatment by offenders in the community in each of the last five years is not available. However, since October 2000 drug treatment can only be imposed by the courts as a provision of a drug treatment and testing order (DTTO). The DTTO National Standard requires that appointments are arranged to take place with the Probation Service within one working day and with the treatment provider within two working days of the order being made and this is being achieved in over 75 per cent. of cases. From 2004–05 areas have been set a target to increase this performance to 90 per cent.

Forensic Medical Examiner Training

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the toxicology awareness module for forensic medical examiner training will be in use; and when details of it will be available. [146768]

Paul Goggins: Training on collecting evidence for toxicology is already in place for Forensic Medical Examiners (FMEs). It is incorporated in the Association of Forensic Physicians (AFP) introductory and development training courses. More specialised teaching also occurs at regional training courses and at conferences. The courses include training on toxicology issues relating to complainants of sexual assault and drug facilitated sexual assault.

Gun Crime

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what meetings his Department has had with community organisations working to combat gun crime. [149785]

Caroline Flint: We have held three round-table meetings on gun crime, the most recent on 25 November 2003. These have included representatives from community groups and organisations. The meetings have provided opportunities to take stock of existing action to tackle gun crime and gun culture and have helped to inform our forward approach.

In addition, the Home Office hosted a major gun crime/community involvement event in Birmingham on 19 and 20 January this year. The event brought together individuals from communities, local groups, voluntary organisations, young people, the police and policy makers to explore the nature of gun crime and gun culture and to help identify what more can be done to tackle these issues.

Home Detention Curfew

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which offences are assessed as being unsuitable for release on home detention curfew. [149088]

Paul Goggins: Prisoners currently serving sentences for the following offences are statutorily excluded from release under the Home Detention Curfew scheme:

Violent and sex offenders serving an extended sentence

Prisoners serving a sentence for an offence under section 1 of the Prisoners (Return to Custody) Act 1995 (for failure to return to custody following a period of temporary release)

Prisoners serving a sentence imposed under paragraph 3(1)(d) or 4(1)(d) of Schedule 2 to the Criminal Justice Act 1991 in a case where the prisoner had failed to comply with a requirement of a curfew order

Fine defaulters and contemnors, whether civil or criminal.

Prisoners who are liable to the registration requirements of the Sex Offenders Act 1997 are also excluded from the scheme.

In addition, with effect from 14 July 2003, prisoners serving sentences for the following categories of offences are presumed unsuitable for release under the Home Detention Curfew scheme unless there are exceptional reasons to grant release:

Homicide

Causing explosions, placing explosives, possessing explosives

Possession of offensive weapons

Possession of firearms with intent

Cruelty to children

Racially aggravated offences

The presumption against suitability also applies to prisoners with any history of sexual offending.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evaluation he has made of the effectiveness of the Home Detention Curfew Scheme. [149089]

Paul Goggins: The operation of the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme is monitored on a weekly basis. Between January 1999, when the scheme was introduced, and 9 January 2004, over 86,000 prisoners have been released under the Home Detention Curfew scheme. At any one time about 3,600 low risk prisoners, who would otherwise be filling prison places, are serving the last part of the custodial portion of their sentence on HDC. Since the scheme began 90 per cent. of those granted HDC have completed their curfew period without any problems at all and 2 per cent. are reported as having been convicted, cautioned or are awaiting prosecution for an offence committed while subject to HDC.

In addition, the Home Office published an evaluation of the operation of the first 16 months of the scheme in June 2001 (Home Office Research Study 222: "Electronic Monitoring of released prisoners: an evaluation of the Home Detention Curfew scheme").

I am satisfied that the scheme continues successfully to provide suitable prisoners with a smoother and more effective re-integration back into the community by enabling them to be released from prison early while still subject to restrictions placed on their liberty.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the confidence of the public in the Home Detention Curfew Scheme. [149090]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has not carried out a survey specifically addressing public attitudes to the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme but the scheme has been running successfully for over four years and public confidence in the Prison Service over this period has remained good. Ministers regularly receive correspondence about the scheme. Most of this concerns individual cases; only a small proportion expresses any concerns about the principles that underpin HDC.

Human Trafficking

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what support his Department offers to *(a)* women and *(b)* children who have been victims of human trafficking; and what funding has been allocated to this work. [144610]

Paul Goggins: The White Paper "Secure Borders, Safe Haven"—published in February 2002—sets out our general proposals for assisting the victims of trafficking.On March 10, we launched a pilot scheme offering protection and support to adult female victims of trafficking for purpose of sexual exploitation. The victims who are willing to come forward to the authorities, and help law enforcement against organised criminals, are offered protection—through safe accommodation, and a range of support services such as counselling and health checks, managed by a voluntary sector organisation.

We will also consider, in the light of individual circumstances, whether it would be appropriate to allow such victims who have co-operated to remain here. Where they are to return home, we will assist them to do so, providing them with initial counselling, ensuring that they have suitable accommodation to return to, and providing help to enable them to re-integrate into their own community and find employment.

Under the provisions of the Children Act 1989, minors are the responsibility of local authority social services departments. It is not possible for minors to be admitted to the pilot scheme.

The funding allocation over three years (2002–05) is £1.3 million.

Identity Cards

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the potential costs and benefits of identity cards in reducing automated fraud within Government departments; if he will make a statement on current levels of effectiveness in dealing with automated fraud within Government departments; and how his Department plans to ensure personal privacy once identity cards are introduced. [147447]

Beverley Hughes: The Cabinet Office Study on Identity Fraud (published in 2002) estimated the cost of identity fraud in a number of Government departments. According to the Study the main departments affected by identity fraud are Department of Health, Customs and Excise, Department for Work and Pensions and the Home Office—the amount lost in 2000–01 was estimated to be £681 million.

The incorporation of biometric information into identity documents, which was announced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in his statement on a national identity cards scheme, will provide a unique link between the identity document and the person to whom it is issued. This will allow Government departments who provide a public service to identify uniquely whom they are dealing with and therefore help to prevent losses caused by identity fraud.

Identity cards will also allow Government departments to prevent unauthorised access to services, an example would be claims to free non-emergency NHS treatment by people whose immigration status does not entitle them to this treatment.

The Home Office has recently established a cross public-private sector work programme to tackle identity theft and identity fraud. This programme is specifically examining:

- policy development (eg identify opportunities for combating identity fraud through data sharing or creating new criminal offences)
- developing and sharing good practice (eg improving the procedures for checking and issuing official documents such as passports and driving licences)
- scoping studies and potential pilots to identify new systems to counter identity fraud

In addition to this work, the Passport Service is piloting a system to conduct more background checks on passport applications. DVLA is working with the Passport Service and other Government Departments to raise the quality of its identity checks using good practice already identified elsewhere.

We have also looked at legislative changes to make identity theft or fraud easier to prosecute or to ensure that the penalties associated with fraudulent use of documents reflect their use in creating false, or stealing genuine, identities. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 changed the law to align the penalty associated with fraudulently obtaining a driving licence with that for fraudulently obtaining a passport and to make these offences arrestable. This will ensure consistency of approach during prosecution so that fraudulently obtaining either document will incur a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment, serving as a more effective deterrent and ensuring that neither document is considered a weak link in establishing a false identity.

We have also announced our intention to create a new offence relating to being in possession or control of false identity documents, without reasonable cause. This offence will provide the police with the means to disrupt the activities of organised criminals and terrorists at an earlier stage of their activities.

The Home Office and its Agencies take every reasonable action to identify fraudsters and pass on their details to the police for appropriate action.

We are satisfied that an identity cards scheme that complies with the Data Protection and Human Rights Act can be developed and implemented, just like other similar schemes operating currently in European countries.

"Identity Cards—The Next Steps" (Cm 6020), published in November 2003, by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary explained that the National Identity Register would only contain basic identity information such as name, address, date of birth, gender, immigration status and a confirmed biometric—and that this will be set out in statute. Organisations using the National Register to verify identity will not be able to get other personal information, for instance health or tax records, via the Register.

The police and other organisations will not have routine access to data stored on the National Register. However, there are strong arguments for giving them access to help fight serious crime and terrorism. Such access will be set out in statute and there will be independent oversight of the arrangements as there is at the present time. There will be no new power for the police to stop someone and demand to see their card.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the compulsory phase for the holding of an identity card will commence. [149206]

Beverley Hughes: In his announcement on 11 November 2003, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary stated that the Government have decided to build a base for a compulsory identity cards scheme. We intend to proceed by incremental stages. When the conditions are right, the first stage phased roll-out will be followed by a move to a compulsory card scheme in which it would be compulsory to have a card, though not to carry it.

A final decision on a move to compulsion will require a full debate and a vote in both Houses of Parliament.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions his Department has had with representatives from other countries on the *(a)* benefits and *(b)* best practice in the introduction of identity cards; and what the outcome of those meetings was. [149207]

Beverley Hughes: Identity card schemes have existed in all EU countries for many years, with the exception of Denmark and Ireland.

Home Office officials have had detailed discussions with colleagues involved in the operation of identity card schemes in Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands and lessons learned have informed the development of policy where appropriate.

In addition, comprehensive information has been supplied by each of the EU member states on the operation of their card schemes, including its introduction and the benefits associated with the card scheme. The results of this work comprise Annex 3 of "Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud: A Consultation" (CM 5557) published in July 2002, and have since been updated.

Home Office officials will continue to work closely with colleagues in EU member states.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost per card of introducing identity cards; and what percentage of this each card-holding citizen will be expected to pay. [149208]

Beverley Hughes: In his announcement on 11 November 2003, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary stated that the Government have decided to begin the process of introducing a national identity cards scheme.

Set up costs for the first three years have been estimated at £186 million. Costs thereafter will be covered by charges. It would not be appropriate to publish more detailed information than that set out in the Identity Cards—The Next Steps publication while we prepare options for procurement and implementation of the identity cards scheme. However, we are continuing to work with potential suppliers and partners to ensure estimates are accurate, realistic and deliverable.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* private and *(b)* public companies will collect the biometric information necessar for the proposed identity card scheme. [149209]

Beverley Hughes: In his announcement on 11 November 2003, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary stated that the Government have decided to begin the process of introducing a national identity cards scheme.

The first stage of the process will include close work across Government to develop effective technology, particularly on biometrics, and to introduce systems to ensure that biometric data can be collected, stored and used effectively. This includes a biometric pilot which is being run by the United Kingdom Passport Service to test the recording of face, iris and fingerprint biometric information.

It is too soon to make any decisions on the types of organisation which may collect biometric information.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the implications of the introduction of identity cards for the common travel area between the UK and Ireland; [149931]

(2) when he next plans to meet Irish government officials to discuss the introduction of identity cards in the UK; [149932]

(3) what negotiations he has had with the Irish Government concerning the introduction of identity cards in the United Kingdom. [149933]

Beverley Hughes: There have been discussions with the Irish Government at both Ministerial and official level about those aspects of the introduction of identity cards which are of particular relevance of them, including the Common Travel Area. The Common Travel Area cover the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man as well as Ireland, and the UK and its operation affects everyone travelling within it, whatever their nationality. Routine immigration checks are not carried out on people travelling within the area. The Government's proposals for identity cards do not compromise the principle of the Common Travel Area. Discussions will continue with the Irish Government on those issues.

Identity Theft

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to counter identity theft. [148596]

Beverley Hughes: Following the conclusion of the consultation on Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud in July 2003, the Home Office is taking work forward on the introduction of identity cards, including examining the role identity cards could have in countering identity theft and fraud.

In addition to this work, the Passport Service is piloting a system to conduct more background checks on passport applications. DVLA is working with the Passport Service and other Government Departments to raise the quality of its identity checks using good practice already identified elsewhere.

We have also looked at legislative changes to make identity theft or fraud easier to prosecute or to ensure that the penalties associated with fraudulent use of documents take account of their use in creating false, or stealing genuine, identities. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 changed the law to align the penalty associated with fraudulently obtaining a driving licence with that for fraudulently obtaining a passport and to make these offences arrestable. This will ensure consistency of approach during prosecution so that fraudulently obtaining either document will incur a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment, serving as a more effective deterrent and ensuring that neither document is considered a weak link.

We also announced in 2003 our intention to create a new offence relating to being in possession or control of false identity documents, without reasonable cause. This offence will provide the police with the means to disrupt the activities of organised criminals and terrorists at an earlier stage of their activities.

The Home Office has recently established a cross public-private sector work programme to tackle identity theft and identity fraud. This programme is specifically examining:

policy development (e.g. identify opportunities for combating ID fraud through data sharing or creating new criminal offences);

developing and sharing good practice (e.g. improving the procedures for checking and issuing official documents such as passports and driving licences); and

scoping studies and potential pilots to identify new systems to counter ID fraud.

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to the public on the protection of their personal details. [148599]

Beverley Hughes: It is not currently a criminal offence for a person simply to use another identity. However, false identities are often used to facilitate other offences such as deception and money laundering. Crimes such as theft and robberies are carried out sometimes to obtain personal documents, which are subsequently used to create false identities.

The general guidance we have issued on being safe, secure and how to avoid being a victim of crime, will help prevent personal documents from being stolen and misused. This includes caution on sending financial details in emails and ordering goods over the internet and being mindful of carrying valuables on the person.

Police forces offer advice to the public on how to avoid being a victim of identity theft as part of their crime prevention activity.

Passports and driving licences are the two main official documents that are used currently to help prove identity. The UK Passport Service has produced guidance on keeping passports safe and what to do if they are lost or stolen. It highlights that

"If your passport is lost or stolen you should be aware that, in addition to the inconvenience of acquiring a replacement, the document (passport) and your identity are open to misuse".

The booklet also explains how to keep your passport secure when abroad.

DVLA is considering the advice that it currently provides and is looking into what guidance it can offer to drivers on looking after their licences, including the fact that their identity could be open to misuse if their licence is lost or stolen.

We have encouraged financial organisations and utilities to provide regular guidance to their customers on how to safely dispose of statements and bills, which are often used to help prove identity. We hope that private sector organisations will play their part in raising public awareness on how to handle and safely dispose of these and other types of personal documents.

International Criminal Conduct

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers the Secretary of State has to intervene in matters of international criminal conduct, in relation to imprisonment in the UK of those found guilty of crimes. [147122]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 January 1003]:* The investigation and prosecution of those suspected of criminal conduct are matters for the competent police and judicial authorities and the Secretary of State cannot intervene in the decisions taken. As a general rule, the courts here can only deal with crimes committed in this country. There are some exceptions to the general territorial rule including murder, terrorism, sexual offences against a child and torture. Decisions on whether to seek a person's extradition for the purposes of prosecution are also a matter for the competent authorities.

Under the terms of the Repatriation of Prisoners Act 1984, and international agreements to which the United Kingdom is a party, the Secretary of State can request the repatriation to the United Kingdom of British nationals imprisoned overseas and authorise the repatriation of foreign nationals imprisoned here. Under the International Criminal Court Act 2001, the United Kingdom can also reach agreement with the Court so that persons convicted by the Court can serve their prison sentences in this country.

Juvenile Prisoners

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of self-injury have been recorded at each of the prisons in the juvenile estate since 1 December 2001. [144357]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is provided in the table. As the establishments hold both juveniles (aged 15–17 years) and young offenders (YOs, aged 18–20 years), a breakdown of self-harm incidents by age range is also provided.

	Establishment					
	Ashfield	*Hollesley Bay*	*Huntercombe*	*Werrington*	*Wetherby*	*Total*
Juveniles						
December 2001	13	0	0	1	1	15
2002	166	4	4	1	9	184
2003[1]	159	2	38	2	14	215
Total juveniles	338	6	42	4	24	414
YOs						
December 2001	4	0	0	0	0	4
2002	48	0	2	0	0	50
2003[1]	101	0	7	0	0	108
Total YOs	153	0	9	0	0	162
Total incidents	491	6	51	4	24	576

[1] Up to 30 November 2003.

Note:
The figures provided are number of incidents, not number of individuals. Some individuals will repeatedly self-harm. In December 2002, a new form for reporting self-injury (the F213SH) was introduced across the prisons estate, which seeks to address the problem of under-reporting of self-injury.

A number of intervention strategies have been introduced into prisons, young offender and juvenile establishments for people who self-harm. These include counselling, support groups, and specialised psychological interventions.

Intercept Evidence

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the admissibility of intercept evidence in criminal trials. [144579]

Paul Goggins: A review is currently under way.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government intends to introduce the extension of magistrates courts' sentencing powers under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 *(a)* before and *(b)* after the planned implementation of the custody plus scheme. [143295]

Paul Goggins: No final decisions have been made about the timing of implementation of these two provisions.

Merseyside Crime Initiative Unit

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many swift justice cases there have been due to the Street Crime Initiative Unit in Merseyside. [146238]

Paul Goggins: Under the Street Crime Initiative, courts are ensuring that street crime cases move through the criminal justice system without unnecessary delay and that trials are given hearing dates as early as practicable.

Merseyside aim to provide a good quality of prosecution, using the Premium Service approach. The Crown Prosecution Service are co-located and work closely with the police from an early stage of investigation to progress cases through the courts. In one case last year a defendant was charged and convicted in the Liverpool Crown court in 30 hours.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many and what percentage of witnesses on Merseyside applied for special measures in giving evidence in the last year for which figures are available; and how many and what percentage had their request granted; [146240]

(2) what assessment has been made of witnesses' reactions to the special measures available in Merseyside to allow them to give their best evidence in court; [146241]

(3) what research has been undertaken on witnesses' views of their treatment by Merseyside Crown Prosecution Service. [146242]

Paul Goggins: In 2003 the Crown court at Liverpool received 497 applications for Special Measures. Information on the number of applications received by magistrates courts and youth courts is not held centrally. The number and percentage of successful requests in the Crown court is also not held centrally. These figures could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Surveys of witnesses' views towards special measures were conducted before and after the first phase of implementation of the special measures. The findings of the pre-implementation survey were published in 2001 (Home Office Research Findings 147, http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/r147.pdf). The post-implementation survey was conducted in 2003 and is currently being written-up.

The Witness Satisfaction Surveys of 2000 and 2002 measured general witness satisfaction with various agencies, including the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors230.pdf, http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/r133.pdf, http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/f189.pdf

Witnesses interviewed for these surveys were drawn from courts throughout England and Wales and analysis was done on that basis. Apart from the disproportionate cost of gathering the information requested, the number of interviews carried out in Merseyside would probably be too small to allow statistically meaningful analysis.

Miscarriages of Justice

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which unit in his Department dealt with reviewing alleged miscarriages of justice before the establishment of the Criminal Cases Review Commission; how many applications the unit received in each of the last five years for which figures are available; how many cases were referred to the appropriate court of appeal; and how many sentences were *(a)* reduced and *(b)* quashed as a result of referral in each of the last 10 years for which the unit operated. [143482]

Paul Goggins: C3 was the unit responsible for reviewing alleged miscarriages of justice before the establishment of the Criminal Cases Review Commission in 1997.

Figures for the number of applications to C3 are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, it is recorded that

> "the figure for 1992 was 790 of which 634 involved a custodial sentence".

Figures relating to referrals of convictions are only readily available from 1989 onwards and referrals of sentences from 1990. The convictions referred to the Criminal Division of the Court of Appeal by the Home Secretary from 1990 to the establishment of the Criminal Cases Review Commission and their outcomes are as follows:

	Convictions referred	*Convictions upheld*	*Convictions quashed*
1989	6	0	6
1990	20	0	20
1991	12	0	12
1992	13	4	9
1993	10	4	6
1994	12	7	5

	Convictions referred	Convictions upheld	Convictions quashed
1995	17	7	[1]10
1996	12	2	10
1997[2]	3	1	2

[1] Includes one case where only two of several counts were overturned.
[2] January to March only.

In addition the Home Secretary referred sentences back to the Court of Appeal as follows:

	Sentences referred
1990	3
1991	8
1992	1
1993	0
1994	3
1995	2
1996	7
1997[1]	0

[1] January to March only.

However, the information available on their outcomes is uncertain and could be verified only at disproportionate cost.

Multi-agency Public Protection

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders are covered by the multi-agency public protection arrangements; what proportion of these are *(a)* registered sex offenders, *(b)* other sexual offenders or *(c)* violent offenders; and how many are considered to pose a high risk to the public. [143390]

Paul Goggins: The total number of offenders falling within the remit of the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in the reporting period 2002–03 was 52,809. 41 per cent. were registered sex offenders; 56 per cent. were violent offenders and other sexual offenders; and 3 per cent. were other offenders who fall into neither of the first two categories but who pose a risk of serious harm. In 2002–03, 2,843 MAPPA offenders were referred to a multi-agency public protection panel because they posed the highest risk of harm and/or because the management of those risks was particularly difficult.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders have been referred to a multi-agency public protection panel in the last 12 months. [143391]

Paul Goggins: In the reporting year 2002–03, 2,843 offenders subject to the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) were referred to a multi-agency public protection panel.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders subject to the multi-agency public protection arrangements are under covert surveillance; and what estimate he has made of the cost per day of such surveillance. [143392]

Paul Goggins: Covert surveillance includes a range of monitoring activities which can vary greatly in scale and duration. No record of the number of surveillance operations on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) offenders is kept; and because of the broad range of this type of activity no generalised estimate of cost has been made.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the performance of multi-agency public protection panels. [145271]

Paul Goggins: Two pieces of research into the multi-agency public protection arrangements (the MAPPA) are being conducted and will report next autumn. One will evaluate the effectiveness of the statutory framework of the MAPPA; the other will analyse the offenders referred to the multi-agency public protection panels and will identify good practice.

In addition, the publication of an annual report on the MAPPA by each area of England and Wales provides a regular review of this important area of work. My written statement to the House on 15 September 2003 announcing the publication of these reports, indicated that the MAPPA have made a significant contribution to improving public protection.

There is a further requirement where the court is considering making a Detention and Training Order on an offender below the age of 15: the court must additionally be satisfied that the young person is a persistent offender. (The Detention and Training Order is the standard order for offenders under 18 who are sentenced to custody).

National Offenders Management Service

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff employed by the 42 probation areas in England and Wales will be transferred to the National Offenders Management Service Regional Structure; and what their duties will be. [147660]

Paul Goggins: In the short term probation staff will continue to be employed by their probation board. It is too early to say how many staff will be needed in the new structure.

Individual probation areas will continue to function as they are for the moment. However, as the new organisation develops, offender managers from the National Offender Management Service will assume end to end responsibility for offenders and will contract with providers of services from the public, private and voluntary sector. We have not as yet finalised our view as to the future of the 42 boards within this framework. My right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary has, therefore, specifically sought the views of key stakeholders.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps will be taken to ensure that there will not be an increase in the administrative demands on front-line staff following the creation of the National Offenders Management Service; and if he will make a statement. [148165]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 19 January 2004]*: The Government are committed to the reduction of unnecessary bureaucracy, particularly in regard to demands on front-line staff. The National Offender

Management Service implementation team will seek to reduce the administrative demands on front-line staff wherever possible.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his intention that local probation areas will become an integral arm of the National Offenders Management Service and retain operational freedom; and if he will make a statement. [148166]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* Individual probation areas will continue to function as they are for the moment. As the new organisation develops, offender managers from the National Offender Management Service will assume end-to-end responsibility for offenders and will contract with providers of services from the public, private and voluntary sector. We have not as yet finalised our view as to the future of the 42 boards within this framework. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has, therefore, specifically sought the views of key stakeholders.

National Probation Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many posts are vacant in the National Probation Service; for how long these posts have been vacant; what the average length of time taken to fill vacant posts was in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [145287]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows:

The total number of vacant posts within the National Probation Service as at 30 June 2003 was 1,059.9 full time equivalent, which equates to 5.61 per cent. of the total workforce and is based on agreed funded establishments as at the 1 April 2003.

The National Probation Directorate (NPD) does not collect information on the length of time for which posts remain vacant nor on the average length of time taken to fill vacant posts. The management of the recruitment process is the responsibility of each individual area and as such, will be influenced by area service-delivery priorities and external forces such as the local labour market.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the probation areas in England and Wales will receive less in real terms under the financial settlement for 2004–05, after central recharging and performance-linked penalties are taken into account. [141802]

Paul Goggins: A final decision about the budget for the National Probation Service has not yet been made. The gross domestic product (GDP) deflator set by the Treasury is 2.5 per cent. for 2004–05. It is not expected that any probation areas will have an increase in their main resource allocation of less than the GDP deflator, after central recharging (outside the control of the local area) and performance-linked penalties are taken into account.

Official Receptions

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on the serving of beer at official receptions. [145778]

Fiona Mactaggart: A mixture of both soft and alcoholic drinks are served at official functions as appropriate.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 2 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 43W, on written answers, how many of the parliamentary questions tabled prior to the last four days available for tabling have now been answered; and if he will list in respect of those not yet answered *(a)* the date of tabling and *(b)* the reason for the delay. [145053]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 18 December 2003]:* All parliamentary questions tabled prior to the last four days of tabling have now been answered with the exception of ten which still await a full reply. Of these five were tabled either at the end of October or in early November. The majority of these have been delayed because the detailed information requested is being compiled.

Passports (Vivien and Ambrose Cofie)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Passport Office will return to Vivien and Ambrose Cofie their passports. [144102]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 15 December 2003]:* I wrote to my hon. Friend on 23 January 2004.

Prison Deaths

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many non-natural deaths have occurred in prisons in England and Wales during the last five years for which figures are available. [148607]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is provided in the following table:

	Number of self-inflicted deaths[1]	*Number of homicides*[2]	*Other non-natural causes of deaths*[3]
1999	91	0	0
2000	81	3	1
2001	73	0	0
2002	95	0	2
2003	94	1	1

[1] The Prison Service employs the term "self-inflicted death" which includes all those deaths where it appears the person may have acted specifically to take his/her own life.
[2] Includes alleged homicides
[3] Includes accidents

Reducing the number of self-inflicted deaths and instances of self-harm in prison establishments is a ministerial and Prison Service priority. A proactive three-year programme to develop policies and practices to reduce prisoner suicide and manage self- harm began in April 2001. The programme has included:

The training of suicide prevention coordinators, now operating in the majority of prisons

The increased provision of prisoner peer support through schemes such as 'Insiders' and Samaritan-led 'Listeners'

- An investment of £21 million in six 'safer local' prisons: Feltham, Leeds, Wandsworth, Winchester, Eastwood Park and Birmingham

Projects to develop safer prison design, including safer cells.

Over recent months a wide-ranging review of this programme has taken place in consultation with partner agencies such as the Youth Justice Board and outside organisations such as Samaritans, taking into account the evaluations of pilot projects and emerging research findings. This review will inform future suicide prevention strategy beyond April 2004.

The Prison Service is also developing a violence reduction strategy that re-addresses problems of inter-prisoner violence and bullying by providing a national framework of protective mechanisms and positive behaviour management. A new national cell-sharing risk assessment tool was introduced in June 2002 to enable staff at reception to identify those who may be high-risk prisoners, to prevent cell sharing that may generate prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, and to take the necessary steps to minimise potential harm to others. This procedure is currently being revised in the light of the alleged homicide in 2003.

Prison Disturbances

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many disturbances there were at prisons in England and Wales in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003; at which establishment the disturbances took place; and what the cost to the Prison Service was of the damage caused by each disturbance. [143292]

Paul Goggins: The incident classification system used by the Prison Service does not include 'disturbance'. Incident types most often associated with disturbances are concerted indiscipline, hostage taking, at height incidents (including rooftop protests), barricades and combinations of these. The information given in the following table records the numbers and location of incidents that were serious enough to warrant the opening of the Gold Command suite at Prison Service Headquarters. The Prison Service does not maintain a record of the cost of damage arising from incidents and such information could only be gathered at disproportionate cost.

Number of incidents for which Gold Command suite was opened in 2001

Establishment	*Total*
Ashfield	1
Aylesbury	1
Belmarsh	2
Bullingdon	1
Canterbury	1
Castington	3
Deerbolt	1
Dovegate	1
Dover	3
Full Button	1
Guys Marsh	2
Haslar	1
High Down	1
Hull	1
Leicester	1
Lindholme	1
Littlehey	1
Manchester	1
Moorland	4
Norwich	1
Onley	3
Parkhurst	2
Pentonville	1
Ranby	1
Reading	1
Rochester	1
Rye Hill	1
Swaleside	1
Wakefield	1
Total	41

Number of incidents for which Gold Command suite was opened in 2002

Establishment	*Total*
Altcourse	1
Ashfield	3
Belmarsh	2
Blakenhurst	2
Bristol	1
Brixton	1
Castington	3
Dartmoor	1
Deerbolt	1
Doncaster	3
Dorchester	1
Durham	2
Elmley	1
Everthorpe	1
Exeter	1
Forest Bank	1
Glen Parva	3
Gloucester	2
Guys Marsh	1
Haslar	1
High Down	1
Highpoint North	1
Hull	1
Lincoln	3
Lindholme	1
Littlehey	2
Liverpool	2
Long Lartin	2
Moorland	4
Norwich	2
Nottingham	1
Onley	2
Parkhurst	5
Pentonville	1
Ranby	3
Stoke Heath	1
Swaleside	1
Swinfen Hall	1
Wandsworth	1
Wormwood Scrubs	1
Total	68

Number of incidents for which Gold Command suite was opened in 2003 to 9 December

Establishment	*Total*
Ashfield	1
Brixton	1
Dartmoor	1
Exeter	1
Forest Bank	1
Full Button	1
Haverigg	1
High Down	1
Hindley	1
Huntercombe	2
Leicester	1
Lindholme	1
Liverpool	1
Moorland	2
Northallerton	1
Ranby	2
Stoke Heath	1
Swinfen Hall	1
Weare	1
Wealstun	1
Wormwood Scrubs	1
Total	24

Prison Population

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the probable accuracy of each of the different forecast average prison populations set out in scenarios A-D in the Home Office Prison Population Brief, England and Wales: March 2003 (27/10/03). [143838]

Paul Goggins: The prison projections model has been shown to be accurate in predicting the prison population given the correct assumptions about sentencing. It is not possible to be certain about the direction of future trends in sentencing because trends observed over a number of years cannot be assumed to continue. It is for this reason that the projections cover a range of different scenarios and are regularly updated to take account of changing trends and new policies affecting the prison population. The central projections were updated in the summer and published in the April Prison Population Brief in September. The actual prison population was 116 below the projection used for planning purposes on 12 December 2003.

The projections take into account known changes in policy and legislation where the relevant legislation has been passed and a timetable agreed for implementation. The impacts of the new Criminal Justice Act are therefore yet to be included.

Prison Suicides

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* juveniles have committed suicide while held by the Prison Service in each of the last five years for which records exist. [146751]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Calendar year	*Number of male self-inflicted deaths (not including juveniles)*	*Number of female self-inflicted deaths (not including juveniles)*	*Number of juvenile self-inflicted deaths (aged 15–17)* [1]
1999	84	5	2
2000	70	8	3
2001	64	6	3
2002	84	9	2
2003	80	14	0

[1] These 10 self-inflicted deaths all involved male juveniles.
The Prison Service employs the term 'self-inflicted death' rather than 'suicide.' This includes all those deaths where it appears the person may have acted specifically to take his/her own life.

Reducing the number of self-inflicted deaths and instances of self-harm in prison establishments is a ministerial and Prison Service priority. A proactive three-year programme to develop policies and practices to reduce prisoner suicide and manage self-harm began in April 2001. The programme has included:

The training of suicide prevention coordinators, now operating in the majority of prisons.

The increased provision of prisoner peer support through schemes such as 'Insiders' and Samaritan-led 'Listeners'.

An investment of £21 million in six 'Safer Local' prisons: Feltham, Leeds, Wandsworth, Winchester, Eastwood Park and Birmingham.

Projects to develop safer prison design, including safer cells.

Over recent months a wide-ranging review of this programme has taken place in consultation with partner agencies such as the Youth Justice Board and outside organisations such as Samaritans, taking into account the evaluations of pilot projects and emerging research findings. This review will inform future suicide prevention strategy beyond April 2004.

Prisoner Transfers

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the time it takes to transfer *(a)* male and *(b)* female remand prisoners to prison from court. [149526]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* Private sector contractors are responsible for carrying out the movement of prisoners from courts to prisons. Remand and convicted prisoners, including male and female prisoners, can travel in the same vehicle. No central record of journey times is kept, nor is it possible to identify any differences in journey times between remand and convicted, male and female prisoners.

Contractors are required to deliver prisoners to courts before 9.30 am and back to prisons before their receptions close. Contract managers are robust in monitoring their performance and there are financial remedies built into the present contracts for failure to deliver prisoners to prisons on time.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been transferred between prisons due to population pressures in the last year. [143293]

Paul Goggins: There are around 100,000 prisoner moves between prisons each year. These moves may be for a number of reasons, such as security, discipline or as a result of normal sentence planning. In addition,

prisoners may be moved to ensure full and effective use of places within the prison estate. The reasons for prisoner moves are not recorded centrally.

Prisoners on Release

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the monetary grant made available to prisoners on release from gaol is different if a prisoner provides no fixed abode as their address. [149519]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* A higher rate of discharge grant (£94.40) is paid to prisoners on release only if there is a need to seek, obtain and pay for accommodation. It is only paid to prisoners with no accommodation arranged in advance if this arises through no fault of the prisoner. Otherwise the standard rates of discharge grant paid are £46.75 (for prisoners aged 25 and older) or £37 (for prisoners aged 18 to 24).

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were released from gaol in the most recent year for which figures are available. [149521]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* 91,100 sentenced prisoners were discharged from prisons in England and Wales in 2002.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Bromsfield prison will be ready to receive prisoners. [147371]

Paul Goggins: Construction of Her Majesty's Prison Bromsfield is progressing to schedule and the prison will be ready to open on 17 June 2004, the date specified in the contract.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* original budget figure for running each prison was in each year since 1997. [147418]

Paul Goggins: The table sets out the expenditure, net of any receipts from other Government Departments (Department for Education and Skills, Department of Health and Youth Justice Board), for the public sector prisons for the financial years 1997–98 to 2002–03.

It would incur disproportionate cost to provide details of the original budget allocations to establishments.

Establishment	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Acklington	8,909,492	10,023,027	11, 335,355	12,276,018	12,306,951	13,054,221
Albany	8,749,528	8,697,711	8,909,118	9,585,057	9,638,824	10,214,992
Aldington	2,411,489	2,434,701	,886,808	7,833,229	7,977,359	8,886,442
Ashwell	6,697,763	7,408,379	7,680,868	2,697,533	2,802,068	3,010,142
Askham Grange	2,331,594	2,401,007	2,676,889	10,192,227	10,900,371	11,665,889
Aylesbury	7,650,509	9,077,007	10,040,984	8,139,154	8,449,674	9,496,198
Bedford	7,018,414	7,248,760	7,563,315	28,994,092	30,948,620	31,517,399
Belmarsh	25,315,234	26,527,865	27,314,961	16,420,359	16,696,491	18,407,049
Birmingham	15,326,661	15,028,320	15,967,037	2,523,343	6,024,690	12,205,742
Blantyre House	2,196,754	2,188,236	2,396,923	9,927,491	2,490,332	2,610,224
Blundeston	8,425,017	8,810,746	9,012,0861	11,396,515	9,982,610	10,665,341
Brinsford	8,791,953	9,061,958	9,961,549	16,439,320	12,097,691	13,067,320
Bristol	15,146,051	15,744,783	16,272,600	19,402,789	17,134,205	17,726,084
Brixton	17,174,388	17,897,7001	18,166,073	5,241,812	19,503,711	19,738,370
Brockhill	4,051,940	4,763,808	4,963,904	4,653,131	5,644,934	6,545,910
Bullingdon	12,031,519	12,864,241	13,384,846	14,695,594	6,696,946	8,002,424
Bullwood Hall	4,106,028	4,172,806	4,657,885	5,270,554	15,178,114	16,450,925
Camp Hill	8,517,792	8,650,009	9,072,291	9,625,242	5,629,475	6,735,862
Canterbury	6,521,811	6,654,628	8,217,174	9,557,146	10,096,506	10,773,950
Cardiff	11,229,725	11,629,233	12,000,937	12,531,994	6,268,130	6,718,809
Castington	5,997,825	7,118,033	9,525,575	10,763,724	13,370,996	14,263,886
Channings Wood	9,502,293	9,941,726	10,729,531	11,218,525	11,197,427	12,033,756
Chelmsford	8,734,815	8,949,156	9,663,883	10,629,047	11,238,889	12,381,004
Colchester	74,527	6,704,661	7,504,736	7,506,834	11,573,580	12,872,923
Coldingley	6,714,472	3,227,938	3,304,663	3,385,424	7,909,234	8,151,903
Cookham Wood	3,126,929	13,593,186	13,503,044	14,982,068	3,576,878	3,973,515
Dartmoor	12,835,557	8,132,314	8,821,695	9,561,925	14,631,698	14,952,729
Deerbolt	7,620,113	4,662,999	4,929,515	5,455,195	9,711,053	10,672,540
Dorchester	4,445,551	6,014,723	6,365,773	6,620,509	5,726,272	6,397,176
Dover	5,633,165	6,392,905	6,668,344	6,491,510	6,728,429	7,531,999
Downview	6,199,171	4,255,108	4,625,943	4,711,306	7,158,940	8,572,194
Drake Hall	4,056,811	19,708,046	20,409,679	21,911,360	5,694,213	6,516,051
Durham	18,607,149	1, 793,731	1,887,069	2,002,554	22,550,479	23,777,700
East Sutton Park	1, 773,1 22	5,870,662	6,848,512	7,131,671	2,198.632	2,663,045
Eastwood Park	4,607,587	14,200,527	14,523,519	15,212,300	7,352,500	8,042,491
Elmley	12,632,506	5,690,464	6,074,310	6,392,089	15,151,353	16,103,052
Erlestoke	5,610,877	7,879,992	8,142,013	8,193,360	6,191,130	6,908,722
Everthorpe	7,597,540	9,041,398	9,854,666	9,811,721	7,959,428	8,302,402
Exeter	8,459,288	11,180,260	11,297,289	11,717,517	10,282,669	11,607,391
Featherstone	10,686,762	17,065,612	19,331,692	24,01 0.372	12,549,693	13,097,562
Feltham	16,214,569	6,106,107	6,007,952	6,371,063	24,409,616	30,914,848
Ford	5,977,876	4,120,051	4,456,984	4,950,895	6,271,678	7,235,485
Foston Hall	3,158,492	20,685,706	23,178,174	24,079,724	5,299,241	6,645,225
Frankland	17,174,531	21,743,468	22,664,102	23,505,345	24,550,210	26,165,447

Establishment	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Full Sutton	20,454,411	11,862,882	12,200,677	12,876,755	23,541,026	24,773,246
Garth	11,464,277	8,522,977	8,918,173	9,217,605	12,879,054	13,576,683
Gartree	8,352,713	14,266,498	15,462,663	15,968,177	8,886,522	8,907,622
Glen Parva	13,386,394	6,271,350	6,563,470	6,922,287	16,615,880	17,838,628
Gloucester	6,209,360	9,658,212	10,507,804	11,295,755	7,417,888	7,925,897
Grendon	9,211,347	7,295,626	8,132,646	8,358,283	11,293,398	11,834,438
Guys Marsh	6,230,232	2,700,663	2,875,447	2,948,844	8.103,303	8,984,586
Haslar	2,390,006	3,153,390	3,107,653	4,400,554	2,847,598	3,430,226
Hatfield	4,008,611	9,223,118	9,012,125	9,291,388	4,116,132	merge with moorland
Haverigg	9,551,875	2,560,980	2,650,196	2,777,519	9,638,719	9,846,313
Hewell Grange	2,641,559	16,295,901	16,499,110	17,423,192	3,018,642	3,073,260
High Down	14,750,866	13,250,074	14,677,886	15,485,655	17,266,744	18,620,299
Highpoint	11,694,637	10,801,497	11,287,011	11,883,438	16,860,131	18,628,779
Hindley	10,569,836	9,512,609	10,632,555	11,699,929	13,429,476	17,104,335
Hollesley Bay Colony	10,762,342	18,388,002	19,004,311	19,759,757	12,710.164	14,900,729
Holloway	17,843,585	14,779,354	15,400,969	16,697,115	20,210,798	24,950,875
HolmeHouse	14,409,492	12,209,399	12,872,717	13,376,716	16,789,328	18,220,248
Hull	11,720,848	7,268,697	8,249,263	8,905,472	13,824,391	17,551,047
Huntercombe	5,253,859	4,238,987	4,518,246	4,945,046	10,066,596	12,126,323
Kingston	3,951,883	9,877,289	9,927,441	9,671,523	4,748,471	5,133,177
Kirkham	9,759,154	2,355,686	2,665,271	2,745,209	10.642.725	11,292,357
Kirklevington range	2,439,348	4,797,324	5,062,966	5,293,531	2,806,220	3,088,564
Lancaster Castle	4,638,957	9,833,263	10,461,778	11,808,158	5,718,902	6,137,630
Lancaster Farms	9,661,162	2,451,116	2,786,779	2,838,862	11,726,248	13,087,839
Latchmere House	2,496,035	20,059,553	21,338,015	23,720,772	3,052,466	3,419,175
Leeds	18,394,596	7,864,959	7,886,714	8,294,295	23,291,510	24,161,348
Leicester	7,927,419	9,304,629	9,951,118	9,929,541	8,204,348	81462,450
Lewes	9,234,680	7,708,880	8,008,974	8,298,615	9,985,425	10,262,873
Leyhill	7,173,428	10,775,537	11,163,759	11,436,103	8,585,073	9,761,621
Lincoln	10,822,223	13,758,543	14,237,522	15,677,113	11,655,841	13,468,973
Lindholme	12,241,535	9,087,894	9,454,701	10,094,258	15,386,512	16,782,005
Littlehey	8,960,232	23,977,904	25,072,336	26,382,433	10,376,197	10,532,341
Liverpool	23,391,485	17,348,401	19,035,891	19,767,607	25,565,332	26,779,122
Long Lartin	15,764,682	6,159,671	6,744,065	7,037,553	20,122,537	20,297,349
Low Newton	5,770,762	10,657,161	10,804,102	11,464,235	7,547,572	8,027,668
Maidstone	9,817,528	25,904,732	26,780,910	28,052,557	10,405,357	11,094,821
Manchester	23,679,485	13,222,451	13,684,732	14,421,919	26,037,371	25,453,776
Moorland	12,184,621	2,592,947	2,673,555	3,277,930	15,006,469	20,902,463
Morton Hall	2,536,317	8,787,099	10,079,426	11,397,462	4,821,307	6,514,375
Mount (The)	8,296,716	7,514,987	8,014,446	8,733,767	11,565,509	12,808,539
New Hall	6,982,789	3,220,748	3,310,007	3,742,731	10,413,876	11,888,471
North Sea Camp	3,315,222	4,733,976	4,867,453	5,485,692	3,738,139	4,446,814
Northallerton	4,727,462	12,264,199	13,246,302	13,817,885	5,080,145	5,273,815
Norwich	11,865,139	8,633,539	9,771,270	10,207,330	14,164,851	15,229,088
Nottingham	8,140,323	10,546,373	12,044,121	12,673,587	10,413,672	11,178,582
Onley	9,232,294	11,014,381	11,848,896	12,216,694	13,566,358	14,770,000
Parkhurst	10,806,067	19,311,606	20,079,586	20,816,593	12,434,863	13,259,482
Pentonville	17,276,316	9,259,219	9,703,555	10,719,880	22,239,323	25,047,521
Portland	8,844,909	12,048,350	12,473,587	12,699,382	11,333,924	11,106,772
Preston	12,567,260	10,875,729	11,901,688	12,902,004	13,192,099	14,005,563
Ranby	9,256,035	5,501,540	5,884,279	6,417,856	12,851,506	14,269,727
Reading	5,045,213	15,983,571	15,450,926	15,920,099	6,761,178	7,080,270
Risley	15,895,377	8,230,782	8,805,058	9,335,373	16,393,281	18,221,821
Rochester	8,035,427	3,531,672	4,155,955	4,535,019	8,790,555	8,601,059
Send	3,291,301	4,205,992	4,673,206	4,915,667	4,609,307	4,973,567
Shepton Mallet	3,938,431	5,880,953	6,352,381	6,640,281	4,833,094	4,990,999
Shrewsbury	5,493,907	9,824,844	10,484,861	10,924,138	6,518,034	7,340,719
Stafford	9,451,888	6,305,489	6,373,876	6,648,876	10,624,651	12,305,294
Standford Hill	6,269,281	8,297,202	8,910,829	9,334,943	7,308,028	8,107,638
Stocken	7,220,581	9,840,541	11,109,509	12,861,620	9,454,466	10,199,203
Stoke Heath	8,374,468	8,701,379	10,340,864	10,453,733	13,631,592	15,705,333
Styal	6,462,026	7,002,129	7,248,636	7,446,036	10,894,273	11,529,555
Sudbury	6,914,035	11,175,124	12,643,399	13,300,578	7,606,310	7,700,779
Swaleside	10,858,272	6,789,513	7,007,193	7,235,116	13,493,143	13,776,388
Swansea	6,524,813	6,646,469	7,035,146	7,138,237	7,511,933	8,219,128
Swinfen Hall	5,193,891	6,322,349	6,637,515	6,875,677	7,445,594	7,860,939
Thorn Cross	6,140,617	5,423,030	5,978,839	6,415,420	7,369,808	7,370,209
Usk/HMYOI Prescoed	5,221,149	8,624,297	8,775,236	9,026,083	6,805,526	7,171,809
Verne (The)	8,493,944	18,687,468	18,979,626	20,327,832	9,534,353	10,002,290
Wakefield	17,706,563	21,530,155	23,135,281	24,660,699	19,914,099	20,955,508
Wandsworth	20,228,522	9,035,066	9,678,517	9,965,816	25,450,136	27,936,164
Wayland	8,788,315	9,579,654	10,346,156	10,778,946	9,928,885	10,818,403
Wealstun	9,534,969	7,019,536	6,835,969	7,126,526	10,870,434	11,659,314

Establishment	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Weare (The)	6,062,308	6,777,199	8,662,259	9,059,926	7,340,016	7–920,458
Wellingborough	6,024,330	4,593,312	4,673,381	5,001,314	9,133,034	9,306,369
Werrington	3,600,342	6,813,413	7,510,166	8,1 65,532	5,105,326	5,820,567
Wetherby	6,096,628	4,303,089	4,588,726	4,784,995	8,645,080	10,161,472
Whatton	4,033,449	20,326,350	20,794,066	22,226,567	4,877,528	5,783,699
Whitemoor	19,743,783	10,989,602	11,191,441	11,468,743	22,611,769	24,138,779
Winchester	11,532,770	18,838,067	19,316,507	21,582,330	11,907,739	13,206,337
Woodhill	17,230,414	20,861,114	21,159,767	22,736,149	22,103,665	23,631,597
Wormwood Scrubs	20,654,121	13,310,312	14,274,322	15,150,405	23,256,552	24.691,189
Wymott	13,519,807	—	—	—	14,929,816	15,501,820

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the smaller prisons that are being considered for closure to redirect resources into community punishments; [147431]

(2) if he will list the sites that are being considered to erect the new generation of larger prisons; [147432]

(3) if he will publish the detailed investment case that the Department is making to the Treasury to close smaller prisons and erect larger prisons. [147433]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office is working on a value for money case for a replacement programme to create a new generation of la ger prisons with the facilities needed to deliver effective programmes designed to reduce re-offending. New large prisons could also provide economies of scale, which would allow us to close some smaller prisons and redirect resources to community punishments. This case will be subject of discussion in the forthcoming Spending Review the outcome of which will be published. We will not publish the case we make to the Treasury on which decisions are taken.

There is an established procedure for the announcement of decisions to change the role of or close prisons. Once Ministers take a decision to change the role of or close a prison, staff and local MP's affected by the change or closure are briefed before the formal announcement.

A survey has been commissioned to identify suitable sites for new, large prisons although no sites nave yet been purchased or other commitments made. To be effective in delivering regimes that aid rehabilitation and reduce re-offending new sites need to be close to, or have good transport links with, large conurbations. The search is concentrating on sites available in London and the south east, the west Midlands, the north west and Wales. These are the regions that have the greatest need for additional prison capacity at this stage.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what recent research he has commissioned into the effectiveness of mandatory drug testing in prisons; [143382]

(2) when he will publish the findings of the research into the effectiveness of mandatory drug testing in prisons. [144261]

Paul Goggins: A research study on the impact of the Mandatory Drug Testing programme in prisons is being undertaken by the Office for National Statistics and National Addiction Centre. Their report is now expected to be available in the Spring of 2004.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of seasonal variations in the seizure of illegal drugs *(a)* within prisons and *(b)* from individuals visiting prisons; [143402]

(2) what assessment he has made of seasonal variations in the rate of positive mandatory drug tests in prisons. [144269]

Paul Goggins: Available data on seizures of drugs in prisons and on visitors involved in suspicious incidents do not show any seasonal trends. Random mandatory drug test (MDT) rates in prisons fluctuate quite widely on a monthly basis. However, there is some evidence nationally of a pattern of slight increases in drug misuse in the months of July, August and December.

Probation Boards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of establishing and running probation boards was in *(a)* 2000–01, *(b)* 2001–02 and *(c)* 2002–03. [147627]

Paul Goggins: The cost of running the local probation boards in the three years in question is:

	£ million
2000–01 (Estimated)	529.5
2001–02	580.1
2001–03	626.8

The estimated transition costs incurred to set up the new board arrangements was £2 million, excluding the costs of amalgamating some of the boards. Prior to April 2001, there were 54 probation committees. These were largely autonomous organisations, and produced their own accounts under local authority rules and guidelines. The accounts were not consolidated by the Home Office. The accounts for 2000–01 also included the cost of the Family Court Welfare Service, which transferred out of the Probation Service on 1 April 2001 and is therefore not included in the costs for 2001–02 and 2002–03.

Rape/Sexual Offences Helpline

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the national helpline for victims of rape and sexual offences will be operational. [146769]

Paul Goggins: Plans for the national rape helpline are currently being developed and this matter is under consideration.

Sex Offender Orders

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders are subject to sex offender orders; and how many sex offender orders have been granted in each year since 1999. [143388]

Paul Goggins: Sex Offenders Orders (SOOs) came into force on 1 December 1998 under the Crime and Disorder Act and were subsequently amended by the Police Reform Act 2002. There is no centrally held record of the number of offenders currently the subject of a SOO. However, a SOO has effect for a period not less than five years and can only be discharged before the end of this period with the consent of the police and the defendant. In addition, an individual may only be subject to one SOO at any one time. Therefore the number of SOOs granted by the courts may be used as an estimate to the number of offenders currently subject to such orders.

Since 2001, statistics on the number of SOOs have been collated under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). On 15 September this year, I made a Written Statement to the House announcing the publication of the 2002–03 MAPPA Annual Reports, copies of which I placed in the Library.

Statistics in MAPPA annual reports show that in the period 2002–03, 91 orders were granted. In the period 2001–02, 81 orders were granted.

Between 1 December 1998 and 31 March 2001, it is estimated that a total of 92 SOOs were made.

Child Protection

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to ensure that all relevant Inspectorates implement Recommendation 2.15 of the Joint Chief Inspectors' report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children. [146289]

Paul Goggins: The three relevant Home Office Inspectorates are Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. I am not able to comment on action by other Inspectorates.

Inspection activity is currently being undertaken by the Home Office Inspectorates in respect of relevant aspects of recommendation 2.15 of the joint Chief Inspectors' report, as follows:

(a) In relation to young offender institutions, inspection of child protection arrangements is a central part of each inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons of Young Offender Institutions and Immigration Removal Centres holding children and young people aged under 18 years. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons also advises Her Majesty's Prison Service on children's safeguarding matters, for example supporting a recent review of safeguarding arrangements in all Young Offender Institutions holding children. The inspectorate also undertakes joint inspection of Secure Training Centres with the Social Service Inspectorate.

(b) In relation to the impact of domestic violence on children:

Police issues: Domestic violence is an area of police activity specifically considered by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) during scheduled Inspections of police forces undertaken during a year. In addition, during 2003, a joint inspection of domestic violence was undertaken by HMIC and the Crown Prosecution Services Inspectorate, which included specific consideration of children's safeguarding issues. The report is due to be published early in 2004. A major HMIC Thematic Inspection on Child Protection is also planned for 2004, to address one of the recommendations made by Lord Laming following the Climbie Inquiry.

Probation issues: A thematic element on domestic violence, with a clear focus on children, has been included in the main inspection programme of probation areas by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation—the Effective Supervision Inspection programme. The report on this element is due to be published in summer 2004. The Effective Supervision Inspection programme also includes general consideration of child protection issues in all probation areas.

(c) In relation to the work of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), a joint inspection programme of YOTs is under way, led by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation with involvement from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (along with four other inspectorates). The methodology has been designed to ensure that children's safeguarding issues are covered specifically from early in 2004.

More generally, alongside the specific work above, the Government have put in place arrangements to commission from the Chief Inspectors of services involved with children a joint report on children's safeguards every three years. The next report is due in 2005, A Steering Group involving nine Inspectorates or other regulatory bodies and led by the Social Services Inspectorate has been established to prepare for this.

It is intended that the aim of the report will be:

To review the arrangements across agencies to safeguard children, giving particular attention to children's views and experiences, progress since the last report and the areas identified within the first review as requiring more attention. The review will result in a report to Government making recommendations as necessary.

The themes and subject areas identified have been chosen to ensure that each of the issues highlighted in recommendation 2.15 of the last report is covered. Much of the inspection work will relate to cross-cutting issues between agencies.

Vulnerable Witnesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will assess the effectiveness of the guidance on vulnerable and intimidated witnesses under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. [146290]

Paul Goggins: Comprehensive guidance about vulnerable or intimidated witnesses (VIWs) was issued to practitioners in January 2002. There are no current plans to review this guidance.

Rules of Court relating to Special Measures Directions under the 1999 Act came into force on 24 July 2002. These rules are now being reviewed to improve their effectiveness and it is expected that amending rules will be issued in the spring.

Individual issues of effectiveness are considered as they arise by the national VIW steering group which meets regularly.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether it is his policy that sexual assault referral centres should be at hospitals; [146765]

(2) what allocations have been made from the Home Office funds for sexual assault referral centres in 2003; and to whom; [146773]

(3) what plans he has to increase the numbers of sexual assault referral centres; when he intends further such centres to be in operation; and where they will be located; [146774]

(4) whether it is his policy that health trusts should be involved in the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* running of sexual assault referral centres in co-operation with the police; [146766]

(5) when the results of the evaluation of the sexual assault referral centres *(a)* Star, *(b)* Reach and *(c)* St. Mary's will be published; [146775]

(6) what the current estimate is of *(a)* the cost of establishing a sexual assault referral centre if a new build is necessary and *(b)* the annual cost of running a sexual assault referral centre; [146770]

(7) what directive has been issued to police forces on the role they ought to play in establishing sexual assault referral centres in areas where there are none; [146771]

(8) how he intends that further sexual assault referral centres should be financed for *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue costs; [146772]

(9) when he expects to publish the evaluation of the Forensic Nurse project at St. Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre. [146777]

Paul Goggins: The Government are currently considering ways in which further support may be provided to victims of sexual crime. This objective may be achieved through the use of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs); rape crisis and other counselling and support services; national or local telephone helplines; or some combination of these. We are looking at all the options as part of the work being undertaken to implement the national strategy for victims and witnesses, which was published in July 2003.

An Inter Departmental Ministerial Group (IDMG) on Sexual Offending has been set up. It comprises representation from the Home Office, Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Law Officers' Department, Department of Trade and Industry and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The group will focus on: prevention, protection, and support; taking forward the implementation of the Sexual Offences Act; and promoting an effective, joined up approach to tackling sexual offending. The Inter Departmental Ministerial Group will consider provisions for victims of sexual offences, including issues around the development and funding of SARCs throughout England and Wales.

The Home Office has funded research into three existing SARCs: St. Mary's, Reach and Star. The interventions, which were funded from July 2000 to the end of March 2003, included: training a forensic nurse to conduct forensic examinations; an intervention to help reduce attrition; and an intervention to support young victims of sexual violence. An independent evaluation of these interventions and of the overall services of the three SARCs has now been completed and the findings are due to be published in late spring 2004.

No directive has been issued to the police or health trusts on the role that they ought to play in the establishment of SARCs. The research findings and the Inter Departmental Ministerial Group will inform future policy on the development and funding of SARCs, including the development of good practice guidance. This will draw on the experience of existing SARC managers and victims.

Many existing SARCs are based at hospitals and the police have worked closely with health trusts in their establishment. However, different models of SARC will be best suited to different areas and the needs of the local community. Funding of existing SARCs has been negotiated and agreed locally, in most cases between the police and local health authority. The cost of establishing and running a SARC will vary according to the model.

The Home Office recently made funds available to support the development of SARCs. In September all police authorities were invited to bid for this funding. Grant offers are being finalised and an announcement will follow shortly.

Sexual Offenders

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) which steps are being taken to avoid offenders on the sexual offenders register *(a)* absconding and *(b)* changing their names without informing the police; [149680]

(2) how frequently offenders on the sexual offenders register who are resident in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon receive visits by the Cambridgeshire Constabulary. [149683]

Paul Goggins: The requirement for sex offenders to notify the police of their name and address was introduced in the Sex Offenders Act 1997 and has proved an invaluable tool in helping the police to monitor convicted sex offenders within their area. An offender who is subject to the notification requirements must inform the police within 14 days of using a new name or moving to a new address. A failure to comply with the requirements is a criminal offence, with the maximum punishment set at five years imprisonment. We estimate that compliance with the requirements is currently around 97 per cent.

We are improving the notification requirements through the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Once the Act comes into force, relevant offenders will have to go to their local police station at least once every 12 months to confirm that the details held by the police are correct. They will also have to provide the police with their

national insurance number and notify any change to their name or address within three days, rather than the current 14 days.

The Sexual Offences Act also includes a new power which will enable the information notified by registered sex offenders to be regularly checked against information held by the Department of Work and Pensions, the UK Passport Service and the Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency. The purpose of this is to verify that the information notified by relevant offenders is correct and this will help to identify more quickly those cases where an offender assumes a new name or address without telling the police or where an offender absconds.

Sex offenders who are subject to the notification requirements will also:

(a) continue to be visited by police officers as part of the routine management of sex offenders living in the community;

(b) be subject to the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements which provide an increasingly effective way of enhancing public protection through better joint-agency working, including intelligence on where an offender is living and any other homes they may use;

(c) have their details recorded on the new Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) database which will hold additional information and improve the sharing of intelligence between law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many offenders on the sexual offenders register resident in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon are classed by the police to be low risk; [149682]

(2) how many sexual offenders resident in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Huntingdon were on the register for sexual offences on 1 January. [149684]

Paul Goggins: On 15 September 2003 I made a Written Statement to the House announcing the publication of the 2002–03 Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Annual Reports, copies of which I placed in the Library of the House. Each of the 42 Areas of England and Wales publish a MAPPA Annual Report and this year's contain a more detailed breakdown of the number of sexual and violent offenders in each area and some of the outcomes of multi-agency public protection work. Cambridgeshire's MAPPA report stated that there were 282 registered offenders in the area on 31 March 2003. Statistics are not available for each town in the county.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary has informed me that 42 per cent. of registered sex offenders in the county are classed as "low risk". In line with other police areas, the offenders classed as "very high risk" are visited at least once a month; those classed as "high risk", at least once every two months; those classed as "medium risk", at least once every six months and those classed as "low risk", at least once every 12 months.

Small Businesses

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department uses a database of individual small businesses for consultation purposes. [142476]

Fiona Mactaggart: Yes, the Home Office has used the small firms database supplied by the Small Business Service twice

Speeding

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much revenue the Metropolitan Police received from the operation of *(a)* speed and *(b)* red light cameras in 2002; and how much was (i) imposed and (ii) collected in fines resulting from (A) speed and (B) red light cameras in London in each of the last five years. [149795]

Caroline Flint: The amount of revenue which the Metropolitan Police received from the operation of safety (speed and red light) cameras in 2002 is not yet known. Police forces receive income from safety camera fixed penalties under the provisions of the national safety camera netting-off scheme. The London Safety Camera Partnership, of which the Metropolitan Police are a member, joined the scheme in July 2002. Partnership performance and revenue received, from this time up to March 2003, will be detailed in the next report on the progress of the national safety camera scheme. The Department for Transport, which manages the scheme, expect to publish this report in March 2004.

Before 2002, the Metropolitan Police received no income from safety the number of speeding and red-light offences detected by cameras in the Metropolitan and City of London Police areas and the estimated revenue for the five years up to 2001 is shown in the table. Information for 2002 will be available in the next few months.

Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for speeding and traffic light offences detected by cameras[1,2,3] in the Metropolitan Police District (including city of London), 1997–2001

	Fixed Penalties		*Court Proceedings*		
Offence and year	*Number of tickets*	*Estimated revenue (£)*	*Number of fines*	*Total amount of fine (£)*	*Average fine (£)*
Speeding offences[2]					
1997	15,300	612,900	2,500	259,600	102
1998	14,200	566,200	2,900	356,800	125
1999	13,000	521,920	2,600	288,400	111
2000	44,100	1,910,700	2,200	256,700	115
2001	52,100	3,128,600	4,500	513,700	114
Traffic light offences[3]					
1997	10,800	433,900	1,300	94,200	75
1998	9,700	386,700	1,200	95,500	78
1999	12,100	483,200	2,000	178,300	88

Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for speeding and traffic light offences detected by cameras[1,2,3] in the Metropolitan Police District (including city of London), 1997–2001

	Fixed Penalties		Court Proceedings		
Offence and year	Number of tickets	Estimated revenue (£)	Number of fines	Total amount of fine (£)	Average fine (£)
2000	22,200	961,400	5,900	525,900	88
2001	10,800	646,900	6,600	478,800	73

[1] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999.
[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[3] Offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988 and The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994.
Note:
1. Paid i.e. no further action.
2. Estimate based on £40 fixed penalty charge to October 2000. From November 2000 the penalty was raised to £60.
3. Estimates were made to cover the loss of fixed penalty data by the Metropolitan Police for October 1999.
4. Excludes City of London

Widows and Widowers

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* widows and *(b)* widowers have been widowed in such a way that an inquest has been required in each of the years 1997 to 2002. [145978]

Paul Goggins: This information is not collected centrally.

The number of inquests held in each year from 1997 to 2002 is contained in Table 3 of the Home Office Statistical Bulletin "Deaths reported to coroners, England and Wales, 2002", a copy of which is in the Library. It is not possible to deduce from this table the proportion of deceased persons represented by those inquests who would have left a widow or widower.

Women Prisoners

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to reduce the number of women held on remand. [142892]

Paul Goggins: The significant increase in the female prison population, and the wider consequences of this in terms of disruption to their families, particularly their children, underlines the importance of using custody as a last resort.

The Women's Offending Reduction Programme (WORP) is a three-year programme that aims to promote a more focused and joined-up response to the range of factors that have an impact on why women offend.

A long-term aim of the WORP is to reduce the number of women in custody. We are particularly concerned about the 58 per cent. of women held on remand who do not go on to receive a custodial sentence. This is why the WORP focuses on the need to maximise the opportunities for diversion at the pre-sentence stage.

Gender specific training and guidance for sentencers, court report writers and bail information staff will be supported by the development of more appropriate community interventions that are better tailored to meet the needs of women, particularly those with mental health and substance misuse problems. Ensuring appropriate housing or bail hostel provision for women will also be key to reducing the use of remand. The potential for diversion is likely to be increased by improving the court's confidence in available community provision.

Young Offenders

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements are made by youth offending teams to escort juvenile prisoners home on release from prison. [144367]

Paul Goggins: Arrangements for escorting juveniles home on release are made on a case-by-case basis, usually at the final review meeting at the end of the period in custody. The preferred arrangement is for a parent, relation or other carer to meet the young person and take him or her home. Where this is not possible—for example, where alternative accommodation has been arranged—a youth offending team worker will usually accompany the young person.

In reaching decisions the age and assessed vulnerability of the young person is always taken into account.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his plans to provide drug treatment for young offenders addicted to drugs in *(a)* the north west and *(b)* Lancashire. [149965]

Caroline Flint: To ensure that effective treatment is available when it is needed, we have made significant investments in the youth justice system and drug treatment sector throughout the United Kingdom with the north west and Lancashire among those areas benefiting.

Sustained investment in young peoples drug treatment, means that by March 2004 95 per cent. of all drug action teams (DATs) will provide a minimum of six different types of treatment interventions, which meet a tough set of young peoples focused quality standards. The interventions include restricted and Tier 3 services.

In addition, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) is providing £8.5million funding each year to give all 155 youth offending teams across England and Wales access to an allocated named drugs worker. The drugs worker is able to assess the needs of young people and ensure that they receive appropriate treatment or other interventions. This project is currently being evaluated by the Home Office.

An arrest referral scheme for young people is currently being piloted, to get young offenders into treatment or other appropriate interventions as early as possible. £6 million is being invested to pilot arrest referral for young people in 10 high crime areas across England including Liverpool and Manchester. Trained staff in the police custody suites identify if young people have a substance misuse issue and refer them to appropriate treatment or intervention.

Youth Justice System

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the use of deprivation of liberty in the youth justice system. [145172]

Paul Goggins: Young offenders should be deprived of their liberty only as a last resort. Courts considering a custodial sentence must be satisfied that the offending behaviour is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified or, in the case of a violent or sexual offence, that such a sentence is needed to protect the public from serious harm. The only other situation where custody can be given is where the young offender refuses to co-operate with the requirements of a supervision order or a drug treatment and testing order. The court must also explain in open court its reasons for giving custody.

There is a further requirement where the court is considering making a Detention and Training Order on an offender below the age of 15: the court must additionally be satisfied that the young person is a persistent offender. (The Detention and Training Order is the standard order for offenders under 18 who are sentenced to custody).

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to ensure that the principle of non-discrimination is fully implemented within the youth justice system. [145174]

Paul Goggins: In 2004–05, the Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales will have a new diversity target. The precise form of words is still to be agreed but the aim will be to ensure that local youth offending teams in England and Wales have measures in place to tackle differential outcomes for different ethnic groups within the youth justice system.

To support this target, the YJB are working with the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders to help youth offending teams to produce action plans. This work will be informed by research commissioned by the YJB from Oxford University looking at the experiences of young black people in the youth justice system. This research is due to be published early in 2004.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* secure children's home places and *(b)* places for children in prison were available in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2003; and if he will make a statement. [145213]

Paul Goggins: In April 2000, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) assumed responsibility for commissioning and purchasing secure accommodation for juveniles from the prison service, private sector, and local authority secure children's homes, and for setting and monitoring standards. Before then, there was no separate juvenile secure estate.

Information is available on places in secure children's homes (see table) though not all would be used for young people in the criminal justice system. There were no designated places in 1997 for juveniles in prison service accommodation. For 2003–04, 3,066 places have been designated as being available for 15 to 17-year-olds in Young Offender Institutions—Young people below the age of 15 are not held in prison service accommodation.

In 2003, in addition to the above, 194 places in England and Wales are available in Secure Training Centres (STCs). No STCs were in operation in 1997.

Places approved at local authority secure children's homes in 1997 and 2003 were as follows:

	As at 31 March	
	1997	*2003*
England	330	425
Wales	20	20
England and Wales	350	445

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 27 January 2004

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Domestic Violence

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases the Crown Prosecution Service has prosecuted on Merseyside that concern domestic violence which have been pursued by the police as primary complainant without the corroboration of the individual assaulted. [150145]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service does not routinely collect data that show the nature of the evidence on which a domestic violence case proceeds. CPS Policy Directorate is currently analysing the results of a national snapshot survey of cases finalised in December 2003. This will provide some information about the point raised by the hon. Member with regard to cases finalised in December 2003. Until CPS case-tracking systems are fully computerised, the detailed information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Serious Fraud Office

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Solicitor-General what the overall conviction rate for cases pursued by the Serious Fraud Office was in 2003. [150062]

The Solicitor-General: The Serious Fraud Office's (SFO) statistical information is recorded by financial year (5 April to 4 April). Since 5 April 2003, the SFO has convicted 19 out of 29 defendants, a conviction rate of 66 per cent. The conviction rate since the inception of the SFO in April 1988 is 70 per cent. (403 convictions from 575 defendants).

TRANSPORT

Cycle Lanes

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he has issued to local authorities in respect of the width of cycle lanes; and if he will make a statement. [149535]

Mr. Jamieson: Advice on the recommended widths of cycle lanes is contained in "Cycle Friendly Infrastructure", published in 1996 by the then Department of Transport in conjunction with the Institution of Highways and Transportation and others.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 216W, on speed cameras, how much money was raised in fines by the Essex Safety Camera Partnership for each of the five years prior to 2001–02. [147572]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 13 January 2004]:* The amount raised in fines detected by speed cameras within the area covered by Essex Safety Camera Partnership between 1997 and 2001 was as follows:

Court proceedings and fixed penalties data for speeding offences detected by cameras[1,2] in the Essex police force area, 1997–2001

	Court proceedings			Fixed penalties	
	Number of fines	Total amount (£)	Average fine (£)[3]	Number of tickets[4]	Estimated revenue (£)[5]
1997	880	93,900	107	18,800	753,700
1998	1,700	227,400	134	8,700	346,600
1999	2,100	357,400	169	19,800	791,400
2000	2,800	317,800	115	46,300	2,007,200
2001	6,500	651,200	101	81,900	4,911,100

[1] Automatic cameras until 1998. All camera types from 1999.
[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motorway Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways Regulations 1973).
[3] Includes fines imposed by courts (cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court).
[4] Paid i.e. no further action.
[5] Estimate based on £40 fixed penalty charge to October 2000. From November 2000, the fixed penalty was raised to £60.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will meet the March deadline for awarding the full-production contract for the CVF. [147280]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Carrier (CVF) programme is currently in Stage 3 of the Assessment Phase, which is due to continue until spring 2004. It is our intention that, at this point, Ministers will consider proposals on the overall CVF programme, and make a decision on when to proceed to the Demonstration and Manufacture Phases of the carriers. The target in-service dates for the carriers remain 2012 and 2015.

Airfield Support Service Project

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what part of his Department's budget the equipment and services to be provided under the Airfield Support Service Project will come from; and what the cost will be. [149058]

Mr. Ingram: The estimated cost of the Project is some £1.2 billion over 15 years. It will be funded from within the budgets of the stakeholders involved in the project.

Body Armour

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many sets of body armour have been issued by the Army since 1989; to which units they have been issued, and in what quantities; how many men served in each of those units; and if he will make a statement. [149655]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Foreign Defence Equipment

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many foreign aircraft, and of what makes and type, have been hired by his Department in each of the last five years. [150408]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Future Rapid Effects Project

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce the name of the company selected to undertake the assessment phase of the Future Rapid Effects System project; how much has been allocated to fund the assessment; and when FRES is due to enter service with the Army. [149564]

Mr. Ingram: I hope to be in a position to make announcements on the way ahead for the FRES programme shortly. We are planning on early variants of the system being introduced into service around the end of the decade.

Reservists

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many man training days were available to reserve forces in each of the last five years. [R] [149407]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The number of man training days available to the volunteer reserves varies by Service, category of reserve, unit role, level of readiness, and individual trade or specialism. In each of the last five years all volunteer reservists have had enough man training days available to qualify for bounty.

Sea King Helicopters

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Royal Navy Sea King helicopters engaged in military action in the Gulf in March 2003 were supplied with *(a)* night vision equipment and *(b)* night flying aids. [150991]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Night Vision Goggles (NVG) can be operated only in aircraft that have been specifically modified for this role. Naval helicopters are fitted to allow operation with NVG according to their tactical role in operations. Of the 20 Royal Navy Sea King helicopters deployed to the Gulf, the 10 amphibious assault helicopters were fitted with NVG, as their operational role required.

Aircrews are fully trained to fly at night without NVG under normal operating procedures. Safety is provided by a variety of other aids and by individual action. These include: operating procedures such as, air traffic control, awareness of hazards through radar detection, communications, lighting and lookout.

Service Personnel (Osteoporosis)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the incidence of osteoporosis in British Service personnel and military medical auxiliaries who served in *(a)* the 1991 Gulf War and *(b)* the invasion of Iraq in Operation Telic in 2003. [149606]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has no centralised system for monitoring and recording the health status of Service and ex-Service personnel. However, over 3,220 veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf Conflict have been seen at the Gulf Veterans' Medical Assessment Programme (GVMAP) to date. At the time they were seen, none had been diagnosed with osteoporosis. There are currently no data relating to the incidence of osteoporosis in those who served in Operation Telic.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what liaison takes place between English Nature and her Department in relation to the potential disease status of badgers targeted for removal and relocation. [150580]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer on 6 January 2004, *Official Report,* column 249W, and on 20 January 2004, *Official Report,* column 1186W.

The Department's Veterinary Endemic Diseases and Zoonoses Division (VEDZD) advise the badger licensing authorities in Defra's Rural Development Service and in English Nature, on potential bovine tuberculosis disease transmission risks associated with badger relocations. No licence is issued without first seeking advice from VEDZD.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the status is of *(a)* the Independent Science Group and *(b)* the TB Forum in relation to the control of TB; what requirement there is for her to (i) abide by and (ii) consider the advice of these organisations; and whether these organisations can veto proposals made by her Department. [150543]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB is an advisory NDPB. Its primary objective is to oversee the design and analysis of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial. Its complete Terms of Reference can be accessed on the Defra website.

The TB Forum aims to bring together experts and organisations with an interest in the Government's policy on bovine TB, to consider new measures which might be taken to control the disease in cattle.

Ministers consider carefully the advice of these bodies in formulating policy. However, there is no requirement for Ministers or the Department to abide by their advice, nor do these bodies have any formal power to veto departmental proposals.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report,*

column 217W, how many closed herds where disease prevention measures have been judged by her officials to be adequate have suffered TB breakdowns in the last 10 years. [150551]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra does not keep a record of which herds are closed and definitions of a 'closed' herd vary. Defra keeps a record of cattle births and deaths, and their movements from known locations in England, Scotland and Wales. Were a 'closed' herd to be very strictly defined, it would be possible to identify closed herds from records of holdings that only register births and deaths, but have no animal movements on. However, this could be done only at disproportionate cost.

A survey of TB breakdowns (known as 'TB99') is under way and is designed to assess potential risk factors that may predispose herds to TB outbreaks.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 December, *Official Report*, columns 629–30W, on bovine TB, if she will take steps to compensate herd owners for uninsurable consequential losses arising from the TB infection, where there is clear evidence of no culpability. [150846]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no plans to compensate farmers for consequential losses after a TB breakdown.

Bumble Bees

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the relationship between the size of the bumble bee population and the size of the badger population in England. [150942]

Mr. Bradshaw: Badgers are known to excavate and eat the nests of bumble bees and have the potential to exert an influence on the abundance of the bees locally.

The Department has not commissioned any studies to assess the relationship between the abundance of badgers and bumble bees, nor are we aware of any research specifically examining this topic.

Commission on Food and Farming

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department's budget for the implementation of the Commission on Food and Farming's recommendations is to be spent in each year of its duration. [148441]

Alun Michael: The Government announced a sum of £500 million to implement the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food as part of the 2002 Spending Review, in addition to existing spending by Defra and other Government Departments which is already being used to deliver aspects of the strategy.

This sum covers a number of major aspects of the strategy. These include the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme (Entry Level and Higher Level) and the IT system to underpin all the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) schemes; improvements in livestock traceability and other major animal health and welfare measures; and new food chain initiatives such as the Food Chain Centre and English Farming and Food Partnerships.

The cost breakdown is shown in the table.

£ million

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*Total*
Additional money to be made available via grant schemes	9	11	11	31
Investment into research and new technology	1.8	1.8	1.8	5.4
Development and implementation of new agri-environment and rural development schemes, including IT development costs	27	54	151	232
Development and implementation of new Whole Farm Approach to reduce bureaucracy and burden on farmers	2.7	7	8	17.7
IT systems to support livestock identification and tracing	20	48	68	136
Investment to reduce the likelihood and impact of an animal disease outbreak	25	45	45	115
Total				537.1

Dairy Farming

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the future economic viability of the dairy industry in the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [148697]

Alun Michael: Low farmgate prices for milk have caused considerable problems over the last few years and the dairy sector faces considerable problems in adjusting to the new conditions that will be created by a reformed common agricultural policy. The Government recognise these difficulties, but believe that the UK dairy sector has a sustainable future and will work alongside the industry to facilitate and support its development in line with its "Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food". The UK has a comparative advantage in terms of climate, farm efficiency and size over many of its competitors. If the dairy supply chain can work together to maximise this potential and address some of the difficulties it faces, then there is no reason why it should not succeed.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of staff employed within her Department are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145933]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Alexander) on 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1130W.

EU Regulations (Fruit)

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the impact on imports of bananas from Commonwealth nations in islands around Jamaica arising from the decision of the Law Lords on the EU regulations relating to the shape of bananas. [147013]

Alun Michael: The House of Lords judgment in the Asda case has no bearing on imports of bananas. It confirms the validity of UK enforcement powers and has no effect on the EU Marketing Standards, whether for bananas or other fruits and vegetables, which are directly applicable under EU law.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what difference there is in mortality rates in round fish escaping through diamond mesh compared with square mesh. [149131]

Mr. Bradshaw: Experiments to compare the mortality among fish escaping from diamond mesh codends, square mesh codends and diamond mesh codends fitted with square mesh panels have been inconclusive. This is because the techniques used were at an early stage in development. No significant difference in mortality for cod or any other gadoid was evident between the different gears.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated mortality is in immature cod entrained by commercial trawl nets which escape through the mesh. [149129]

Mr. Bradshaw: Experiments conducted by the FRS Marine Laboratory at Aberdeen and other European institutes indicate that the survival of immature cod 25m or more in length escaping from trawl cod-ends is likely to be high (>90 per cent.).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the primary foods consumed by *(a)* haddock and *(b)* cod in the North Sea are; and what food they consume if their primary foods are not available or in short supply. [149132]

Mr. Bradshaw: Cod feed opportunistically on many species of invertebrates (e.g. worms, molluscs, brittle stars, crabs, shrimps and prawns) and fish (e.g. whiting, cod, haddock, Norway pout, plaice, dab, sprat, herring, and sandeel). Haddock feed similarly on a wide range of invertebrates and a rather narrower range of fish. In young gadoids, invertebrates predominate, but as fish become older the amount of fish in their diet increases. Diets vary very considerably in detail from one place, season or year to another. Cod and haddock may concentrate on one or two individual prey species when these are very abundant, but when such prey become scarce, cod in particular can move and switch from one species to another.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated cod by-catch from the industrial fishing fleet in the North sea was in each of the last five years, broken down by *(a)* percentage and *(b)* tonnage. [149138]

Mr. Bradshaw: The by-catch of cod in industrial fisheries in the North sea comprises a part that is sent for reduction to fishmeal and oil, and a part that is sorted and landed for human consumption. As reported to ICES, these represent less than 1 per cent. of the total quantity of North sea cod landed.

North sea cod: industrial by-catch, in weight and as a percentage of the total international cod landings (ICES, 2003)

	Reduction		*Human consumption*	
	Tonnes	*Percentage*	*Tonnes*	*Percentage*
1998	400	0.27	530	0.36
1999	100	0.10	230	0.24
2000	60	0.08	200	0.29
2001	100	0.20	125	0.25
2002	30	0.06	100	0.19

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the scientific expectancy is of fish stock improvement in the North sea following the 10 per cent. cut in the sandeel quota. [146681]

Mr. Bradshaw: The provisions on North sea sandeels agreed at the December Council of Ministers include not only the reduced quota for 2004 but also new effort regulations to improve management of the stock. Sandeels are short-lived, and the state of the sandeel stock itself is very dependent upon this year's "recruitment" of young. Consequently we welcome both the quota and effort restrictions. We attach importance to the effective management of this fishery, and will continue to seek further improvements.

However, the sandeel fishery does affect other fisheries. It does this through the by-catch of other commercial fish (such as haddock and whiting), and through the removal of fish which are prey to other larger fish. Some by-catch is allowed for in the agreed quotas, and ICES reports that the remaining by-catch is small. A reduction in the sandeel fishery was also found to have little effect on the availability of prey to other fish. To sum up, the evidence does not suggest that the sandeel restrictions will have a significant effect on our roundfish stocks, but what effect there is should be to their benefit. However, we do not think that this is the last word on the subject and are continuing to undertake research on the effect of sandeel fisheries.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department's scientists have made of the effect on cod fisheries in the North sea of heavy exploitation of sandeels. [149136]

Mr. Bradshaw: Exploiting sandeels could potentially affect cod through the food chain, or through the by-catch of cod in the sandeel fishery. Work is still in progress on these questions. On the food chain issue,

large scale stomach sampling by ICES shows that cod feed on a wide range of prey species, and that for the North sea as a whole sandeels account for 5–15 per cent. of the diet of cod aged two years and older. At the North sea level, sandeel shortages tend to be short lived, and have not yet been shown to be critical for cod, but the question of more local effects needs further study. On the by-catch issue, small-meshed sandeel fishing occurs in some areas where early stages of cod may settle onto the sea bed, but sampling results officially reported to ICES indicate that the cod by-catch in sandeel landings is very low.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what types of fishing gear are used by the Scottish white fish fleet. [149116]

Mr. Bradshaw: The main types of demersal fishing gear used by the Scottish whitefish fleet are single boat trawl, pair trawl, pair seine, twin trawl. There are few Scottish vessels operating Scottish seines, gillnets or lines.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how the fishing capacity of a vessel is measured in relation to the effect of different engine power between vessels of similar tonnage. [150900]

Mr. Bradshaw: The capacity of fishing vessels is measured both in terms of their tonnage and in terms of their engine power. Engine power is recorded as kilowatts. The ceilings on the overall size of the fleets of each EU member state are defined as separate limits on tonnage and engine power.

For the purpose of licence transfers in the UK the Vessel Capacity Unit is currently used. This is a measure of vessel capacity which is solely related to the physical dimensions of a vessel and its engine power:

VCU = length (m) x breadth (m) + 0.45 x power (KW)

It is thus possible that two vessels of the same tonnage could have different capacities when calculated under this method if there are differences in length, breadth or engine power. The Fisheries Departments in the UK are reviewing the present capacity penalty arrangements with the intention of moving to a system based on tonnage and engine power rather than VCUs.

Common Agricultural Policy

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money from the Common Agricultural Policy has gone into the Yorkshire and Humber region in each of the past five years. [143305]

Alun Michael: The table shows the payments made by the Rural Payments Agency and its predecessors under the Common Agricultural Policy in the Yorkshire and Humber region in each of the past five European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund years—16 October to 15 October. The figures quoted for 1999 relate to the period from 1 March of that year when the Agency introduced its new accounting system.

	Amount (£)
1999	147,906,481.89
2000	265,826,830.32
2001	265,162,593.53
2002	254,428,355.91
2003	256,035,777.90

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what conditions have been imposed by the European Commission in respect of the submission of claims for expenditures incurred and payments made by her Department in relation to foot and mouth disease. [150850]

Mr. Bradshaw: The European Commission has been very specific with regards to the timing for the submission of the UK claims, and the type of expenditure eligible for re-imbursement from the Community for eradication of FMD in 2001. Eligible expenditure is detailed in Council Decision 90/424/EC (Article 11) and includes compensation for slaughter of animals; the destruction of milk; the cleaning and disinfection of premises; and the transport and destruction of carcasses.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what specific and general requirements are imposed or otherwise demanded by the European Commission in relation to establishing and proving an audit trail for expenditures incurred and payments made by Her Majesty's Government during the foot and mouth epidemic, in respect of sums repayable in whole or in part by the Commission. [150552]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Commission auditors continue to carry out on the spot checks of the costs incurred during the 2001 FMD outbreak. These checks include the examination of invoices and supporting documentation in line with recognised auditing procedures.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total value is of the claims made by Her Majesty's Government to the European Commission in respect of costs incurred in dealing with the foot and mouth disease epidemic of 2001; and what the total value is of the payments made by the Commission. [150553]

Mr. Bradshaw: The total value of the claims made to the European Commission in respect of costs incurred in dealing with the foot and mouth disease epidemic of 2001 was £1,581 million. The maximum rate of reimbursement is 60 per cent. of these costs; so the potential reimbursement is £949 million.

The Commission's auditors are still auditing the claim and have not indicated when they will complete their audit. To date the Commission has made payments to the United Kingdom of £238 million.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the cost to date is to her Department of *(a)* auditing and *(b)* legal fees in respect of (i) investigating claims relating to foot and mouth disease payments, (ii) pursuing and prosecuting alleged or suspected fraudulent claims, and (iii) conducting civil actions; [150556]

(2) what the total value is of work undertaken by contractors in respect of works commissioned by her Department and its predecessor, carried out in relation to the foot and mouth epidemic of 2001, that remain unpaid by her Department. [150559]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Brian Cotter) on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 259–62W.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total payments made to date are to farmers in respect of compensation for animals slaughtered by her Department, and its predecessor, in relation to the foot and mouth epidemic of 2001. [150557]

Mr. Bradshaw: The total payments to farmers to date in respect of compensation for animals slaughtered, by the Department and its predecessor, in relation to foot and mouth disease is £1,033 million.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total value is of the payments due to farmers in respect of compensation claimed for animals slaughtered by her Department in relation to the foot and mouth epidemic of 2001, that remain unpaid by her Department. [150558]

Mr. Bradshaw: The total value of the payments due to farmers in respect of compensation claimed for animals slaughtered in relation to the foot and mouth epidemic of 2001 was £1,033 million. All the farmers have been paid the sums due to them.

Maize Subsidy

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the present subsidy regime is for maize production; and what the total amount spent on subsidising maize production was in the last three financial years. [149638]

Alun Michael: Maize is among the crops which are eligible for support under the EU support system for producers of certain arable crops, implemented through the Arable Area Payments Scheme (AAPS). In the last three financial years (2001–02 to 2003–04), payments for maize to AAPS claimants in England after modulation are calculated to be £13.5 million.

The EU Common Market organisation for cereals also provides for public intervention for maize and export refunds.

Milk

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the operation of the milk-dairy supply chain. [148693]

Alun Michael: Last year the Milk Development Council commissioned a study by KPMG on "Prices and Profitability in the British Dairy Chain" which highlighted a number of areas where the operation of the dairy supply chain might contribute to low farmgate prices in the UK, including the structure of the UK industry, the low value of the product mix and the low level of product innovation within the UK compared with some member states. The Report also identified a number of areas where supply chain efficiency could be improved, through rationalisation or benchmarking.

Many of these factors are for the industry itself to address. However, the Government can and has taken action to facilitate industry action in line with its Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food. In particular:

Lord Whitty has chaired meetings of a Dairy Supply Chain Forum, which has been looking at co-operative solutions to improve supply chain efficiency, as well as other issues;

Under the auspices of the Forum, the Milk Development Council has initiated an innovations workshop to look at barriers to innovation in the sector and how to overcome them;

Defra is participating in a further two sub groups of the Forum, which aim to facilitate the long term sustainable development of the dairy supply chain and help it adjust to the new environment created by the reformed CAP;

The Government has made a grant of nearly £0.5m to the Food Chain Centre to examine how to improve dairy supply chain efficiency; and

We have established English Food and Farming Partnerships to encourage co-operation and collaboration across all agricultural sectors.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on fluctuations in the level of the farm gate price of milk in the last 20 years. [148694]

Alun Michael: The fluctuations in the farmgate price of milk over the last 20 years are caused by a number of factors, including the level of supplies, demand on EU and world markets and exchange rates. However, none of these factors are sufficient to explain why UK farmgate prices have been constantly below the EU average with the exception of a few years after deregulation of the milk market in 1994. This question was examined by KPMG in its report on "Prices and Profitability in the GB Supply Chain", which was commissioned by the Milk Development Council and published last year. The Report concluded that low farmgate prices in the UK were largely the product the structure of the UK industry, the low value of the product mix and the low level of product innovation within the UK compared with some Member States. The Report also identified a number of areas where farmgate prices could be improved by increasing supply chain efficiency, through rationalisation or through benchmarking.

Many of these factors are for the industry to address itself, the Government has taken action in line with its Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food to facilitate industry action. In particular:

Lord Whitty has chaired meetings of a Dairy Supply Chain Forum, which has been looking at collaborative solutions to improve supply chain efficiency, as well as other issues;

Under the auspices of the Forum, the Milk Development Council has initiated an innovations workshop to look at barriers to innovation in the sector and how to overcome them;

Defra is participating in a further two sub groups of the Forum, which aim to facilitate the long term sustainable development of the dairy supply chain and help it adjust to the new environment created by the reformed CAP;

The Government have made a grant of nearly £0.5 million to the Food Chain Centre to examine how to improve dairy supply chain efficiency; and

We have established English Food and Farming Partnerships to encourage co-operation and collaboration across all agricultural sectors.

Organic Farms

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many organic farms there were in England and Wales *(a)* in 2000 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [150055]

Mr. Bradshaw: The figures are as follows:

	August 2000[1]	*March 2003*[2]
England	1,925	2,622
Wales	401	618

[1] Source: Defra internal record
[2] Source: Defra statistical notice—Stats Org UK1—issued on 28 July 2003

Permitted Killing Methods

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the permitted methods are for killing *(a)* moles and *(b)* rabbits in their runs and burrows. [150574]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows.

(a) Moles

The permitted methods typically used to kill moles in their runs are:

Poisoning using worm baits impregnated with strychnine hydrochloride. This can only be used under a specific authority obtained from Defra.

Poisoning with an approved fumigant (aluminium phosphide)

Trapping. There are there are two main types in common use, the scissor (pincer) trap or metal half-barrel trap (Duffus).

Certain other methods are permitted (for example shooting and live capture traps), but these are not widely used in the UK. Further details and advice on the range of available options for managing mole problems are given in the Defra leaflet WM03 "Moles" which is available online at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/leaflets.htm.

Guidance on how to apply for permission to use strychnine hydrochloride for mole control is available online at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/mole.htm.

(b) Rabbits

The permitted methods typically used for killing rabbits in their burrows are:

Poisoning with an approved fumigant (aluminium phosphide or hydrogen cyanide)

Trapping. Traps currently approved by the Spring Traps Approval Order 1995 are the Imbra Trap Mark I and Mark II, Juby Trap, Fenn Rabbit Trap Mark I, Fenn Vermin Trap Mark VI (Multi Purpose), Springer Mark VI (Dual Purpose), Victor Conibear 120–2 and the BMI Magnum 116.

Further details and advice on the range of available options for managing rabbit problems are given in the following Defra leaflets WM01, WM16 and WM17 and in Forestry Commission leaflet FCPN002, which are available online at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/leaflets.htm.

A full list of approved traps and the relevant conditions of use can be found online at: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/approved-traps.htm

Pesticides

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what support the Department provides to the Voluntary Initiative on Pesticides website. [151008]

Alun Michael: Defra provides no support for the website of the Voluntary Initiative on Pesticides.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions *(a)* she and *(b)* her officials have had with the Treasury regarding a tax on pesticides. [150031]

Alun Michael: Providing that it is fully implemented, the industry-led voluntary initiative on pesticides should successfully deliver the reduction in adverse environmental impact of pesticide use to which the Government are committed However, Defra and Treasury officials are continuing to consider options for a tax or other economic instrument should the voluntary initiative fail to deliver agreed objectives within a reasonable timescale. Defra and Treasury Ministers have had no recent discussions on a possible pesticides tax.

Pig Welfare (Poland)

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what evaluation she has made of the pig welfare regulations in force in Poland; how they will change on accession to the EU; and in what respects they *(a)* differ now and *(b)* will differ upon accession from those in force in the UK. [150030]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have made no evaluation of the existing pig welfare rules in Poland. Poland is committed to implementing the EU pig welfare rules in full, by 1 May 2004, into its national legislation. The European Commission is responsible for monitoring how each accession state is progressing in preparing to implement Community law (the 'acquis').

After 1 May 2004, the Commission will continue to monitor Poland's application of the animal welfare acquis, in the same way as it does in existing member states, in order to ensure uniform application of EU legislation.

Poultry

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information her Department collates on the *(a)* quantity and *(b)* type of (i) therapeutic and (ii) non-therapeutic drugs given to chickens in the UK in the last year. [150218]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of Defra, collates and publishes data on an annual basis on the UK sales of veterinary antimicrobials. These data are supplied by industry on a voluntary basis.

In November 2003 the VMD published figures for sales of antimicrobial products used as veterinary medicines, for the year 2002. These indicate that there was a slight decrease in sales of therapeutic antimicrobials indicated for use only in poultry (from 20 tonnes of active ingredient in 2001 to 13 tonnes in 2002). In addition a proportion of the 313 tonnes of active ingredient sold in products authorised for use in more than one species may also have been used in poultry, although it is not possible at this time to quantify this proportion. The figures also show that 250 tonnes of active ingredient of coccidiostats and 27 tonnes of growth promoters were sold. Although these figures have not been broken down by species, the majority of these sales were products authorised only for use in poultry. Full details are available on the VMD's website (www.vmd.gov.uk).

Defra does not collect on a regular basis data on use of other veterinary medicinal products in poultry.

Prosecutions

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions her Department has initiated in the last 12 months; how many of them resulted in *(a)* a conviction and *(b)* an acquittal; and how many were dismissed by the Court on the grounds of an incompetent prosecution. [148920]

Alun Michael: The Department has commenced 159 prosecutions in the last 12 months:

64 have resulted in convictions.

6 have resulted in acquittals.

89 prosecutions remain outstanding.

None of the prosecutions have been dismissed by the Court on the grounds of "an incompetent prosecution".

US Farm Bill

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her counterparts in the United States since the breakdown of the World Trade Organisation ministerial conference in Cancún about the likely impact of the United States' Farm Bill on the *(a)* economies of and *(b)* living standards in, developing countries. [149119]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is on-going contact between UK and US officials about all aspects of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Round, including on the US Farm Bill. During these discussions we have made clear our opinion that the Bill runs counter to our shared goal, as laid down at Doha, of reducing trade-distorting subsidies in the WTO. While it is difficult to make an accurate economic assessment of the impact that the US Farm Bill might have on the economies and living standards of developing countries, World Bank studies estimate that the comprehensive reform of all aspects of agricultural policies in developed countries could raise the incomes of developing countries by up to $100 billion.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Action on Elder Abuse

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will contribute funding to the telephone helpline run by Action on Elder Abuse. [145628]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

The abuse of vulnerable adults is of great concern to the Government. Since the launch of Action on Elder Abuse in 1993, the Department of Health has used grants to fund both the core functions of the organisation and a variety of specific projects including the telephone helpline. Action on Elder Abuse received just under £160,000 over the three years from 1997–98 to 1999–2000 to help establish and successfully operate the national helpline.

Bids for section 64 funding are currently being considered and will be announced on the normal way.

Advertising Expenditure

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total expenditure on information campaigns and advertising was for his Department for each year since 2001–02. [145696]

Fiona Mactaggart: The total amount spent on public information campaigns by the Home Office was:

	£ million
2001–02	25.1
2002–03	18.3

This amount includes the cost of Home Office publications and literature, campaign research, creative development and production, as well as the amount spent on advertising media.

The proportion of these totals spent on advertising media was:

	£ million
2001–02	14.4
2002–03	9.9

During 2002–03 our campaigns included the award winning police recruitment campaign an essential part in the successful recruitment of record numbers of police

officers. Other campaigns contributed to a reduction in vehicle crime, the national firearms amnesty and advising parents and children on safe use of the internet.

In 2001–02 our campaigns again focused on police recruitment, vehicle crime and child protection on the internet. We also ran campaigns to support a reduction in drug misuse, and the introduction of postal voting.

Total expenditure for 2003–04 has yet to be finalised.

Asylum Seekers

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women who had entered the United Kingdom from Somalia and who were refused the right to remain were removed from the United Kingdom during 2003. [148069]

Beverley Hughes: Information on the total number of people who are removed from the United Kingdom is not available by nationality and gender, except by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the longest outstanding asylum case still awaiting a final decision is; and if he will make a statement. [148954]

Beverley Hughes: Information on individual decisions, up to and including the outcome of all potential appeals, is not readily available and could be obtained only by examination of individual case files. This would incur disproportionate cost.

29,100 cases were awaiting an initial decision at the end of September 2003, the lowest level for more than a decade; of these 8,500 cases were work in progress i.e. the application had been outstanding for six months or less.

Provisional data show that 81 per cent. of applications received in the period April to June 2003 had initial decisions reached and served within two months and that 74 per cent. of applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases[1]) received in 2002–03 were decided and served within two months. This exceeded the Government's target of 65 per cent. for 2002–03 and was a significant increase on the corresponding figure of 61 per cent. for 2001–02.

Information on the number of asylum applications awaiting initial decision and the timeliness of initial decisions is published quarterly on the Home Office website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

[1] Cases which may be the responsibility of other EU member states under the Dublin Convention.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people sought *(a)* political and *(b)* religious asylum in the United Kingdom in 2003; how many were granted the right to remain; and how many failed in their applications and were removed. [148955]

Beverley Hughes: The number of people applying for asylum in the United Kingdom during 2003 is not currently available. Provisional data for the number of asylum applications made in 2003 will be published as part of the quarterly asylum statistics on 24 February, on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Information on the outcomes of asylum applications made in 2003 will be published in the annual Home Office Statistical bulletin 'Asylum Statistics United Kingdom'. It is planned that the annual publication for 2003 data will be published at the end of August 2004.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of people making asylum applications over the next three years. [149338]

Beverley Hughes: We have already reduced the number of asylum applications by half since October 2002, meeting the ambitious target set by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister. Current policy initiatives, such as juxtaposed controls in France and the deployment of detection technology at continental ports, are designed to prevent those who seek to circumvent our controls at specific ports of entry from doing so. Measures in the Asylum and Immigration Bill currently before Parliament—for example, measures aimed at those who deliberately destroy their documents to obstruct the processing of their case—will help deter unfounded claims. Together, these measures will reduce overall numbers still further.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of those seeking asylum he expects to be housed in accommodation centres pending their applications being determined. [149339]

Beverley Hughes: Accommodation centres will be introduced on a trial basis with a total capacity of up to 3,000 places during the trial period. We cannot predict what proportion this would constitute of the total number of asylum seekers: this will depend on the average length of stay at an accommodation centre, as well as the number of people claiming asylum and the average period it takes to determine their applications.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision is in place for asylum seekers delayed from leaving the United Kingdom through no fault of their own, under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. [150336]

Beverley Hughes: The current legislation requires that, with the exception of families including children under the age of 18, support for asylum seekers whose claims are unsuccessful must end once a final decision is made on the asylum claim. Families continue to receive support until they leave or fail to comply with directions for their removal. Unsuccessful asylum seekers are expected to leave the country but, where this is not possible due to circumstances entirely beyond the person's control, they may be provided with accommodation under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Generally speaking accommodation will be full board since there is no provision for payment of financial support.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are in place to ensure that child asylum seekers are only detained for very short periods prior to removal. [150337]

Beverley Hughes: Unaccompanied minors are not detained other than in one very limited circumstance: where, exceptionally, it is necessary to detain a child while alternative care arrangements are made and, then, normally just overnight.

Families with children may be detained in the following circumstances: initially, while their identities and basis of claim are established; where there are reasonable grounds for believing that they will fail to comply with the conditions of temporary admission or release; or to effect removal. In addition, families whose asylum claims appear to be capable of being decided quickly may be detained as part of a fast-track process.

The detention of families with children is subject to rigorous and frequent review by a central unit within the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). Where detention is for the purpose of effecting the removal of the family concerned its continuation will be authorised only where it is clear that there is a realistic prospect of removal within a reasonable period of time and that satisfactory progress is being made towards removal. If these criteria are not met, further detention is unlikely to be authorised. In the majority of such cases, detention will last for just a few days immediately prior to removal. For those cases where, exceptionally, detention for a longer period is necessary we have introduced a system whereby the detention of any family with children beyond 28 days is subject to Ministerial authority and review. In addition, a senior IND official has been appointed to oversee all detained family cases to ensure that there are no administrative barriers to speedy case progression.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in ensuring consistent standards in removal centres. [150339]

Beverley Hughes: It is clearly important for standards across the immigration removal estate to be more consistent and we are working to ensure that this is the case.

All removal centres are already required to operate under the Detention Centre Rules 2001, which regulate the operation and management of removal centres and the treatment of detained persons.

In addition, a comprehensive set of Operating Standards are in the process of being developed and issued to all removal centre operators. These Operating Standards set out the minimum requirements expected of operators. It is, of course, open to individual operators to exceed these minimum requirements or, where no single approach is stipulated, to select the most appropriate means of meeting a particular standard in the centre concerned. The individual standards are subject to extensive consultation. To date, Operating Standards have been issued on the following subjects: activities (adults and children); catering; complaints and requests procedures; female detainees; health care; race relations; religion; suicide and self-harm; temporary confinement; and use of force.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment is made of the needs of children before they go to detention centres. [149823]

Beverley Hughes: The general needs of children are considered when a decision to detain a family is made and when the family is taken into detention. Once detained, rule 11(3) of the Detention Centre Rules 2001 requires removal centre operators to provide everything reasonably necessary for detained persons' protection, safety and well-being and for the maintenance and care of infants and children.

Families with children are currently detained at either Dungavel or Tinsley House Removal Centres or Oakington Reception Centre. In all cases they are accommodated in dedicated family rooms within the centre so as to ensure that family members are not separated and, so far as practicable within the constraints of detention, are able to maintain family life. These centres are well equipped and the staff that work there are well qualified to recognise children's needs and where necessary ensure special provision is made.

At Dungavel, where there is a well-established education provision for school-age children, all children are assessed when they arrive to establish their learning needs. We have recently announced our intention to enhance these assessments and introduce contingency curriculum arrangements for children in longer term detention.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision is made for children to be educated in detention centres. [149825]

Beverley Hughes: Removal centres that may hold families with children for anything more than a few days are required to have arrangements in place to provide educational classes to the children concerned. At present, this relates only to Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre and Oakington Reception Centre. The education provision at Dungavel is well established. Classes run every day throughout the week for all school age children. A range of subjects is covered including English, maths, science, food technology and history. Music and art are also provided. The position at Oakington is different in that the need for educational provision has arisen only comparatively recently and is in the process of being developed.

Correspondence

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Manchester, Central dated *(a)* 19 August 2003 re Mr. N. reference 0/985393 and *(b)* 28 August 2003 re: Mr. AA, reference PO 13028/3. [148510]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The information is as follows:

(a) A reply was sent to my hon. Friend on 16 January 2004.

(b) I wrote to my hon. Friend on 26 January 2004.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to the letter dated 8 December 2003 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding asylum seekers in Scotland. [149777]

Beverley Hughes: I wrote to the hon. Member on 23 January 2004.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to the letter dated 31 October 2003 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding his constituent, Mr. G Christie of Fordyce. [149779]

Beverley Hughes: I wrote to the hon. Member on the 22 January 2004.

Criminal Justice Board (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the membership of the local Criminal Justice Board in Gloucestershire and indicate the bodies represented. [144017]

Paul Goggins: The members of the Gloucestershire Local Criminal Justice Board are:

Member	*Body represented*
Tim Brain	Chief Constable (Chair)
John Carter	Chief Officer, National Probation Service, Gloucestershire
Withiel Cole	Chief Crown Prosecutor
Alan Davies	Justices' Chief Executive, Magistrates Courts
David Gentry	Group Manager, the Court Service
Enid Castle	Representing Gloucestershire Police Authority
Phil Kendrick	Gloucestershire County Council Youth Services
David Chalmers	Her Majesty's Prison Service

Drug-related Crime

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the level of drug-related crime in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley; and what the cost of drug-related crime was in each area in each of the last three years. [149966]

Caroline Flint: Recorded crime figures include statistics on drugs offences, such as possession, and on acquisitive crimes, such as burglary, but do not record whether the latter are related to an offender's drug habits.

The NEW-ADAM research programme of interviewing and drug testing those arrested by the police sheds some light on the links between drugs and crime, although the conclusions do not relate specifically to Lancashire and the North West region. Data from eight locations (1999–2000) indicated that more than three-fifths (by value) of acquisitive crime was committed by users of both heroin and cocaine/crack.

The total number of acquisitive crimes recorded by the police in Lancashire and the North West region in 2002–03 are set out in Table 1 as follows (data are not available for Chorley). Acquisitive crimes are burglary, theft, handling stolen goods and robbery.

Table 1: Acquisitive crimes recorded by the police, 2003–03

	Number
Lancashire	89,993
North West	588,566

Source:
"Crime in England and Wales 2002–2003" Home Office Statistical Bulletin 07/03.

Estimates of the costs of drug-related crime are not available annually or broken down by region. However, a recent study published by the Home Office provides estimates of the total economic and social costs of Class A drug use and puts these in the range of £10.1 to £17.4 billion for the year 2000. These costs include the costs of drug-related crime, which are estimated to fall in the range £8.8 to £15.8 billion. The costs of drug-related crime include victim costs and those accruing to courts, prisons and other parts of the criminal justice system.

Entry Clearance

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many appeals against refusal of entry clearance from Pakistan by *(a)* spouses, *(b)* fiancées, *(c)* dependent children and *(d)* dependent elderly relatives are being processed by his Department; what the average time taken in the last 12 months was between receipt of papers from UK Visas and papers being sent to the Independent Appellate Authority; and if he will make a statement. [145402]

Beverley Hughes: I regret that the information on the number of appeals against refusal of entry clearance by nationality is not currently available in the form requested. Appeals against refusal of entry clearance are not sent to UK Visas but go directly to the Appeals Processing Centre (APC) and then to the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA). Data on the average time taken between receipt of papers by the APC and being sent to the IAA are not currently available.

Statistics on the total numbers of refusals of entry clearance are published annually. The latest publication, Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2002, is available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Roma

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the numbers of members of the Roma community who will migrate into the UK from Eastern Europe after enlargement of the EU on 1 May. [150821]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: Research conducted by University College London for the Home Office, published in June last year ("The impact of EU enlargement on migration flows", Home Office On-Line Report 25/03), estimates that the numbers of people expected to migrate to the UK from the new member states in the years following enlargement will not be significant. The research corroborates a number of other independent studies, which have been summarised in reports by the European Commission in 2000 and the former Department for Education and Employment in 1999. It is based in part

on experience of previous EU enlargements, where the large increases in migration flows predicted before enlargement did not materialise.

None of this research has been able to predict exact numbers expected from specific countries or ethnic groups to the UK. However, Roma would have been included in the overall numbers.

Citizens of the new member states who come to the UK will work, contribute to the economy, and pay taxes. The Habitual Residence Test will ensure that no one can simply come here and claim benefits. Powers to deport are available where non-British EU citizens commit offences.

Enlargement should also improve the quality of life for all citizens in the new member states as their governments must enforce human rights and minority rights, including protection against racial discrimination, to EU standards before accession and subsequently. EU accession should also improve economic prospects in the new member states so reducing the incentive for economic migration.

If, contrary to the available evidence, there is a large influx of workers posing a real threat to UK jobs, we will be able to re-introduce restrictions. We will of course be monitoring the situation closely.

Fines

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the reasons for non-collection of fines. [150355]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

There are a number of reasons why, in the past, the collection of fines has not been as effective as it should have been. They include: imposing fines that do not reflect the ability to pay due to lack of information on offenders' income/expenditure; lack of information on offenders' current whereabouts; and a lack of an alternative for those who genuinely cannot pay.

This is being addressed through the seven point action plan I announced in June last year, the Courts Act 2003 measures, and the overall enforcement programme being taken forward by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. These are specifically designed to tackle the root causes of non-collection and secure sustained improvement in fine enforcement performance.

Immigration Appeals

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many presenting officers were in post on 1 October in each of the last four years. [143357]

Beverley Hughes: The number of presenting officers in post and available to present appeals at adjudicator hearings is shown in the following table:

	Number of officers in post
13 November 2000	202
1 October 2001	192
1 October 2002	233
1 October 2003	279

A recruitment exercise is currently under way and a further 65 presenting officers will be in post by mid March 2004.

Medicines (Disposal)

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions there have been in the last five years for the offence of theft of *(a)* controlled drugs and *(b)* time-expired pharmaceuticals from sites disposing of NHS waste. [150440]

Caroline Flint: The information collected centrally on court proceedings does not allow the theft of drugs to be distinguished from other thefts, nor are details of the location of thefts collected.

Penalty Points

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an individual can receive penalty points in respect of more than one driving offence committed on the same day. [148949]

Caroline Flint: Where more than one offence involving obligatory endorsement is committed on the same occasion, the total number of penalty points to be attributed is the number that the most serious offence would attract. Two or more offences committed on the same day but not on the same occasion would attract points separately. It would be for the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and courts to decide whether the different offences amounted to separate incidents or whether they were part of the same continuing incident.

Police Guidelines

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether amendments made by the Association of Chief Police Officers to their media and disciplinary guidelines are publicly available; [143464]

(2) what amendments have been made, following agreement with the Association of Chief Police Officers, to the media and disciplinary guidelines issued to police forces. [143480]

(3) whether anonymity will be granted to those accused of sexual offences if they have learning difficulties. [143481]

Paul Goggins: This matter was debated during the passage of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The Government believe that informed and strengthened guidance to the police and the media is preferable to legislation.

Following discussions between the Association of Chief Police Officers and officials the updated Media Advisory Group Guidance Notes have given greater prominence to this issue. They underline that suspects should not be named before charge and go on to highlight the possible dangers of doing so. The Guidance Notes are available to the public and can be viewed on the website www.acpo.police.uk.

Prisons (Foreign Nationals)

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures are in place to ensure that the Immigration Service *(a)* monitors the sentences of foreign national prisoners, with particular reference to those liable to deportation and *(b)* takes action to ensure repatriation or deportation takes place as soon as a prisoner's sentence has expired. [151082]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: HM prisons are instructed to notify the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) of all foreign nationals sentenced to a term of imprisonment, together with their release dates once calculated.

IND then considers whether a person should be deported or removed and it is our aim, wherever possible, to remove such persons in line with their release from custody.

There are, however, reasons why this may not happen in a particular case. These may include such factors as the need to consider an appeal or application for leave to remain, the non-availability of travel document, difficulties with travel arrangements or other matters which have to be considered or addressed before the deportation or removal can be effected.

IND and the Prison Service work closely together and with individual inmates to keep any delays in effecting removal to a minimum.

Racist Incident Reporting Form

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the standardised multi-agency racist incident reporting form. [150875]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: The minimum data content for the standardised multi agency racist incidents reporting form is in the Code of Practice on reporting and recording racist incidents. This is currently in stock in the Library.

Risk of Sexual Harm Orders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons his Department deems it unnecessary to be required to report to Parliament the numbers of risk of sexual harm orders that are issued on an annual basis. [150126]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office will monitor the use of risk of sexual harm orders (RSHOs) but, as was stated in the response to the Home Affairs Committee's report on the Sexual Offences Act 2003, we do not feel that there is any need for the number of such orders to be reported annually to Parliament. In common with the other civil preventative orders in Part 2 of the Act, statistics will be collected on the number of RSHOs taken out each year and this information will be available if requested.

Terrestrial Trunked Radio

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which recommendations of the National Radiological Protection Board report on health and safety issues of terrestrial trunked radio have been implemented. [149177]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 22 January 2004]*: The Home Office took expert advice from the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR) on the health aspects of TETRA technology. The AGNIR experts concluded that on the basis of current evidence, it was unlikely that TETRA posed a hazard to health. They also made a number of recommendations for further research on remaining areas of uncertainty. No research on masts was suggested. The AGNIR recommendations have been taken forward by the Mobile Telecommunications Research Programme and by the Home Office. Regularly updated information is available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/tetra.html.

Terrorism

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 894W, on the Terrorism Act, if he will break down, by region, the stops and searches carried out since 2001 under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000; what reasons were given for using these powers; and what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increases. [150329]

Mr. Blunkett: A breakdown of stop and searches by Police Force area under section 44(1) and section 44(2) of the Terrorism Act 2000 for the financial years 2001–02 and 2002–03 is provided in the table. This is taken from information published in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin.

Stop and Searches under Section 44(1) or (2) may only be exercised for the purposes of searching for articles of a kind which could be used in connection with terrorism. The decision to authorise use of the powers is made against the background of the current threat level and the assessment of the risk to any designated or whole force area.

The increase in stops and searches can be attributed to an increase in general security throughout the year following September 11 (2001).

	Stop and Searches of vehicles and occupants under 44(1)		*Stop and Searches of pedestrians under 44(2)*	
Police force area	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Avon and Somerset	—	—	—	—
Bedfordshire	8	31	—	—
Cambridgeshire	—	—	—	—
Cheshire	385	302	2	18
Cleveland	—	—	—	—
Cumbria	—	—	—	
Derbyshire	20	—	—	—
Devon and Cornwall	129	—	—	—
Dorset	—	—	—	—
Durham	235	—	3	—
Essex	—	2	—	5
Gloucestershire	36	898	—	—
Greater Manchester	36	210	—	299
Hampshire	10	256	2	38
Hertfordshire	4	—	—	—
Humberside	—	—	—	—
Kent	255	67	2	74
Lancashire	—	155	—	—
Leicestershire[1]	68	45	68	
Lincolnshire	—	—	—	—

Police force area	Stop and Searches of vehicles and occupants under 44(1) 2001–02	2002–03	Stop and Searches of pedestrians under 44(2) 2001–02	2002–03
London, City of	3,409	4,369	86	275
Merseyside	—	—	—	—
Metropolitan	3,598	19,677	473	3,764
Norfolk	2	5	—	—
Northamptonshire	—	—	—	—
Northumbria	—	—	—	—
North Yorkshire	8	110	—	—
Nottinghamshire	—	—	—	—
South Yorkshire	263	105	—	—
Staffordshire	—	—	—	—
Suffolk	—	3	—	—
Surrey	1	31	1	36
Sussex	767	113	310	238
Thames Valley	—	900	—	—
Warwickshire	—	—	—	—
West Mercia	5	—	—	—
West Midlands	—	16	—	20
West Yorkshire	—	18	—	—
Wiltshire	—	—	—	—
Dyfed Powys	—	—	—	—
Gwent	—	—	—	7
North Wales	—	—	—	—
South Wales	—	—	—	—
Total	9,239	27,313	947	4,774

[1] Stops and searches of vehicles and occupants and pedestrians are not separately available for 2002–03

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what meetings have been held since 25 June of the pilot group tasked with taking forward the recommendation adopted at the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council in Brussels on 28 and 29 November 2002 in relation to terrorist profiling; and what was discussed at those meetings. [143380]

Caroline Flint: The informal pilot group held its second workshop on terrorist profiling at the headquarters of Europol on 24 November 2003, with United Kingdom representation. This meeting was essentially a stock take, as the research needed to inform this long-term and complex project is ongoing.

Visa Requirement

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce a visa requirement for all non-EEA nationals entering the UK in the course of business, where the prime purpose of that entry is to engage in anti-trade union activities. [149578]

Beverley Hughes: We have no plans to introduce a specific visa requirement for those seeking entry to engage in anti- trade union activities. However, the Immigration Rules contain provision for the refusal of entry to a person where it is judged that their presence in the United Kingdom is not conducive to the public good. This would allow for the refusal of a person where their character, conduct or associations made their entry undesirable.

Yarl's Wood Removal Centre

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the findings of Mr. Stephen Shaw's investigation into the management of Yarl's Wood Removal Centre will be published; and how they will be made available. [150190]

Beverley Hughes: The timing of the completion of the inquiry into the allegations of racist behaviour and attitudes among staff at Yarl's Wood Removal Centre is a matter for Stephen Shaw. However, we understand that Stephen Shaw would hope to complete his inquiry and report his findings as soon as possible. The report will be published although the details of exactly how this will done have yet to be determined.

Youth Justice System

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when consolidating legislation to create consistent definitions and terminology within the youth justice system will come into effect. [145173]

Paul Goggins: We have no plans to make consolidating legislation on youth justice.

We published on 8 September a consultative document "Youth Justice—The Next Steps" as a companion document to the main Green Paper "Every Child Matters". In "Youth Justice—The Next Steps" we set out a number of proposals, including clarification of the purpose of sentencing a juvenile, and simplification of sentencing. The consultation period ended on 1 December and we are currently analysing the responses. Some of our proposals, if taken forward, will require legislation. This would be brought forward as soon as Parliamentary time permits.

SCOTLAND

IRA Terrorism

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on which dates terrorist incidents ascribed to the IRA have taken place in Scotland since 1973. [142753]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, on 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 618W.

Post Office/Banking Services

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has held with *(a)* the Royal Bank of Scotland, *(b)* Halifax Bank of Scotland and *(c)* Clydesdale Bank concerning the provision of banking services in the Post Office; and if he will make a statement. [150396]

Mrs. McGuire: I plan to meet representatives from the Royal Bank of Scotland in the next month to discuss a range of issue affecting the banking sector.

The three banks mentioned currently allow access to basic bank accounts through the Post Office branch network, but have not agreed to extend this access to other accounts. While the Government would urge all banks to provide their customers with access to their accounts through Post Offices, decisions to do so are commercial ones for individual institutions.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the impact on the Scottish rural post office network of three of the major Scottish banks not offering full bank services at the Post Office; and if he will make a statement. [150397]

Mrs. McGuire: I have made no such assessment. Decisions on whether to extend access to full banking services at Post Offices are commercial ones for individual institutions.

Public Expenditure

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last made a needs-based assessment of public expenditure levels in Scotland. [149630]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has made no such assessment. The details of the funding arrangements were set out in the "Statement of Funding Policy", published by the Treasury in July 2002. The Government have no plans to change the Barnett formula.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next plans to conduct a needs-based assessment of public expenditure levels in Scotland; and whether he anticipates that such an assessment would conclude that current levels are *(a)* higher, *(b)* lower or *(c)* the same as current needs. [149631]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has no plans to conduct an assessment. The details of the funding arrangements were set out in the "Statement of Funding Policy", published by the Treasury in July 2002. The Government have no plans to change the Barnett formula.

Sewel Motions

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list Sewel motions passed by the Scottish Parliament since 26 June 2003 that apply to his Department's responsibilities and legislation he has sponsored. [148749]

Mrs. McGuire: As part of its responsibility for Scotland's devolution settlement, the Scotland Office is involved as necessary in discussions between Government Departments and the Scottish Executive on the application of the Sewel Convention, providing advice in line with Devolution Guidance Note 10. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has not sponsored any legislation that has been the subject of a Sewel motion.

Solectron Dunfermline

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what sums have been paid to the Solectron plant in Dunfermline; and whether funds will be offered to Solectron Dunfermline to assist the relocation of work being carried out by Solectron Carrickfergus. [151004]

Mrs. McGuire: Issues relating to financial assistance to industry were devolved under the Scotland Act and now fall within the responsibility of the Scottish Executive.

TREASURY

Banking Supervision

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints have been received concerning banking supervision in each of the last three years. [151063]

Ruth Kelly: The Financial Services Authority is responsible for banking supervision. The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 required an arrangement for the investigation of complaints against the FSA to be established. Accordingly, the FSA's Complaints Scheme was introduced with effect from 3 September 2001.

The following table sets out the number of complaints received under the Financial Services Authority's complaints scheme concerning an alleged failure to supervise deposit taking institutions.

	Complaints received
3 September to 31 December 2001	0
Calendar year 2002	1
Calendar year 2003	2

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved were in each of these categories listed. [151461]

Ruth Kelly: None.

Economic Survey

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the paper, "Economic Survey-United Kingdom 2004", published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. [150884]

Ruth Kelly: The OECD's assessment of the UK economy was published on 20 January 2004. The Government welcome the report and notes the positive assessment of the performance of the economy over the past few years.

Financial Services Authority

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 816W, on the Financial Services Authority, for which firms the Financial Services Authority has reduced fees; by how much; which fees these were; and when. [151090]

Ruth Kelly: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) reduces fees for all firms in those areas of business where fines have been levied. It received £100,000 in financial penalties in the financial year 2001–02. This was applied

to the benefit of fee-payers in fee block A.7 (fund managers), reducing the fees for all firms in this fee block paid in 2002–03 by 0.5 per cent. of those fees.

The FSA received £9,169,000 in financial penalties in the financial year 2002–03. It applied this amount to the benefit of fee-payers in six fee blocks. In fee block A.1 (deposit-acceptors) there was a reduction of 1.5 per cent. of the 2003–04 fee, in fee block A.4 (firms conducting insurance activities subject to both prudential and conduct of business regulation) a reduction of 3.1 per cent., in fee block A.7 (fund managers) a reduction of 1.7 per cent., in fee block A.12 (advisory arrangers dealers or brokers (holding or controlling client money and/or assets)) a reduction of 29.0 per cent., in fee block A.13 (advisory arrangers, dealers or brokers (not holding or controlling client money and/or assets)) a reduction of 3.1 per cent., and in fee block A.16 (Pensions Review levy firms) a reduction of 11.6 per cent.

Public Finances

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action the UK is planning to address the Government deficit mentioned in COM (2004) 29. [151490]

Ruth Kelly: The projections for the public finances presented in the 2003 pre-Budget report show that the Government remain on track to meet their strict fiscal rules over the economic cycle on the basis of cautious assumptions, with public finances remaining sustainable in the long term.

Furthermore, the UK continues to meet a prudent interpretation of the Stability and Growth Pact, that takes into account debt and long-term fiscal sustainability more generally, the need for public investment, and the economic cycle.

Infant Mortality

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children under the age of one year have died suddenly in each of the last 10 years; and what main reasons have been attributed to those deaths in the most recent of those years. [151094]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Mr. John Pullinger to Mr. Tim Loughton, dated 27 January 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question on how many children under the age of one year have died suddenly in each of the last 10 years; and what main reasons have been attributed to those deaths in the most recent years. I am replying in his absence. (151094)

Information collated at death registration does not generally indicate duration of the conditions leading to death. It is therefore not possible to identify all sudden deaths. However, for any infant death where the certifier mentioned "sudden infant death" or related term e.g. "cot death" or "sudden infant death syndrome", these figures are published as "sudden infant deaths". These figures are shown in the table below. Because of the method used to identify these deaths no further information is available on the reasons attributed to these deaths.

Sudden infant deaths—England and Wales 1993–2002

	Numbers	*Rates*[1]
1993	458	0.68
1994	454	0.68
1995	398	0.61
1996	424	0.65
1997	393	0.61
1998	289	0.45
1999	280	0.45
2000	246	0.41
2001	240	0.40
2002[2]	187	0.31

[1] Rate per 1,000 live births.
[2] Provisional.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in his Department. [150931]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested is as follows:

Inland Revenue

There is a full right of access for audit (including National Audit Office) and security interest across the whole of the Inland Revenue and the IT supplier. This enables the reviewing bodies to fully cover any area of risk as determined by their work planning processes.

All major new computer projects or enhancements have to provide an audit trail of all computer activity by users. IA monitors activity to detect potential fraud and misuse. There is a standard set of audit checks carried out over these developments in order to ensure compliance with all legal and departmental requirements and IA has a seat on the project steering committee to ensure appropriate consideration is given to audit findings.

IA has a specialised computer audit team of qualified professionals who carry out a programme of technical audits over the provision of IT services both hardware and software. They use an international computer audit standard (CoBIT) to risk assess the services and to measure provision against a set of detailed controls. All findings are reported to the responsible senior manager and followed up to ensure appropriate action.

Overall, IA and DSU have a direct reporting line to the Departmental Audit and Security Committee to raise issues that are high risk or that IA/DSU consider are not being addressed adequately by managers.

As already referred to, National Audit Office also carry out pieces of review activity across the Partnership and often work in joint teams with IA and/or DSU.

HM Treasury

The Treasury uses a combination of line management overview and procurement scrutiny to determine whether information technology hardware and software products are being used properly in the Department. These are supported by internal audit and security reviews wherever appropriate. Staff identified as making unacceptable use of IT will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

There are two overarching controls over the use of IT in the Treasury: the Departmental IT strategy which sets the tone for the use of IT, and the annual Business Planning and Budget Planning round which subjects all proposals to high-level business scrutiny.

Further down the line, all IT purchases, whether hardware or software, are required to be supported by a business case to ensure that there is a formal requirement by the Department for the facilities. After implementation, the Treasury has guidelines (promulgated to all staff) on the acceptable use of information technology. Certain rules are enforced (e.g. construct and length of passwords and enforced screen savers) and firewalls are used to protect HMT systems from attack, to protect staff from unwanted correspondence (spam) and to disable unacceptable internet web access.

In general, line managers are responsible for enforcing the acceptable use of IT facilities provided to their staff. However, they have access to the resources of the departmental internal audit and security teams to investigate specific incidents. There are also more general internal audits of IT themes and running contract arrangements to ensure that processes are sound, efficient and effective. The Department is required to conform to Government security regulations and is subject to security audits to ensure that it remains compliant.

HM Customs and Excise

Guidance and standards are published covering the procurement, development and use of IT hardware and software. HM Customs and Excise has developed a single approach to the management of business change—the Business Change Lifecycle. This covers all stages of IT system development and is aligned with the OGC Gateway Review process. It identifies the stages and products that must be produced to comply with the HMCE standards. Once implemented the use of hardware and software is controlled through security standards and acceptable use policy.

It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that the IT systems provided to their staff are used in accordance with the guidance and standards, although additional assurance mechanisms are in place. Managers can call upon the services of our Internal Investigation Division to investigate specific incidents. Compliance is also monitored through an internal assurance programme which contributes to the annual Statement of Internal Control. Our Internal Audit Division also provides assurance over the operation of IT systems through their annual programme of audits. Systems are selected for examination based on a risk assessment, and take account of the significance and materiality to achieving the Department's business objectives. In addition, external audit is carried out by the NAO. Their audit programme includes IT security and specific controls for key systems.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151044]

Mr. Boateng: A Centre of Excellence was established within HM Treasury, Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition based programmes and projects. As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings. All Centres of Excellence are currently developing future plans and as part of this process measurement of savings will be defined.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who the members of the *(a)* Financial Services Authority and *(b)* VAT and Duties Tribunal were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151459]

Ruth Kelly: The information is as follows:

(a) Financial Services Authority

As of 1 January 2004. the members of the FSA Board were:

Member	*Position*
Callum McCarthy	Chairman
Stewart Boyd	Deputy Chairman, Non-executive Director
John Tiner	Chief Executive
Moira Black	Non-executive Director
Tom de Swann	Non-executive Director
Kyra Hazou	Non-executive Director
Michael Foot	Executive Director
Deirdre Mutton	Non-executive Director
Sir Andrew Large	Non-executive Director
Dr. Shamit Saggar	Non-executive Director
Steve Thieke	Non-executive Director
Clive Wilkinson	Non-executive Director

The Chairman is formally appointed to the FSA board for five years and other members for three years. Reappointment is possible for non-executive directors. Executive directors have renewable three year terms of office which coincide with the length of their executive posts at the FSA. Information on the remuneration of board members is published in the FSA annual report. The latest available information is for 2002–03 when the then Chairman received £385,730, Deputy Chairman £45,000, Non-executive directors £20,000 and executive directors between £293,452 to £361,904.

For a list of members of the VAT and duties tribunal, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to him by the Paymaster General on 3 July 2003. The only changes to the membership since then are that Gordon Burnison and Roger Cockfield are no longer members of the panel. Members are appointed for a standard term of five years, at the end of which they may be considered for re-appointment. Members are remunerated a standard fee of £227 for each day sitting.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Heritage Lottery Funding

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Heritage Lottery funding

has been awarded to each Lancashire district in each of the last five years. [150410]

Estelle Morris: Figures by district are not available. The following is the information by local authority:

Local authority	Financial year 1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Total for the last five financial years
Burnley	11,550	1,119,000	99,300		64,657	1,294,507
Chorley	221,450	—	28,500	926,600	43,662	1,220,212
Fylde	—	—	329,000	100,000	36,000	465,000
Hynburn	—	221,500	—	24,000	—	245,500
Lancaster	—	153,400	329,000	1,746,500	60,630	2,289,530
Pendle	47300	250,000	50,000	—	996,000	1,343,300
Preston	90000	103,548	149,800	2,070,500	485,690	2,899,538
Kibble Valley	—	156,000	77,200	15,400	—	248,600
Rossendale	248,500	—	—	—	165,000	413,500
West Lancashire	—	—	—	—	972,500	972,500
Wyre	28,300	—	144,600	—	—	172,900

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in her Department. [150937]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has a range of auditing and monitoring systems in place to ensure that hardware and software are used in accordance with the Department's policies. We have inventory management systems in place for both hardware and software and a metering system monitors all software use. The Department is a corporate member of FAST, the Federation Against Software Theft.

All internet access is logged along with all e-mail. Systems are configured such only authorised software may be installed. All staff sign the Department's Acceptable Use Policy before being allowed access to the Department's IT systems and resign it on an annual basis thereafter. Our procedures are audited both by the Department's own internal audit function and by independent external auditors on a regular basis.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what cost savings have been made in her Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151053]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has established a Centre of Excellence and is working with its sponsored bodies to ensure that IT procurement is effectively managed. It is too early at present to identify any savings that have accrued.

Royal Family

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the contribution to the economy in terms of revenue from tourism generated by the Royal Family in each of the last three years. [150200]

Mr. Caborn: We have no rigorous basis on which to estimate the contribution to the economy in terms of revenue from tourism generated by the Royal Family, but that contribution is certainly substantial.

Significant recent events include the Golden Jubilee in 2002, which proved to be a big draw for visitors from around the world, and the Royal Tourism Day in June 2003.

In addition to such contributions, some of Britain's most popular attractions are directly associated with the Royal Family, including Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London, Windsor Castle, Hampton Court, the Palace of Holyroodhouse and most recently Clarence House. The Palace and the Tower of London are named more than any other attractions by overseas visitors to London, with about a third of them planning to visit them. The biggest free attraction is the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace which is a 'must see' on most visitors' itineraries.

Royal Parks Constabulary

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she plans to brief employees of the Royal Parks Constabulary about the details of its proposed merger with the Metropolitan police and the implications for their terms and conditions. [150290]

Mr. Caborn: The Government have been unable to find the parliamentary time to bring forward legislation to merge the Royal Parks Constabulary (RPC) with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) during the current parliamentary session. It remains our intention to do so at the earliest possible opportunity. In the meantime we are working closely with the MPS and have provided extra funding to establish from 1 April an MPS Operational Command Unit within the Parks to work alongside the RPC to ensure the Parks continue to be policed effectively. The Chief Executive of The Royal Parks wrote to all RPC staff on 16 January to bring them up-to-date with these plans.

Stonehenge (Parker Plan)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions *(a)* her Department and *(b)* English Heritage have had with the proposers of the Parker Plan for road construction near Stonehenge. [149882]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* None. In accordance with paragraph 19(1) and (2) of Schedule 1 to the Highways Act 1980, the Highways

Agency on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport published a notice directing that anyone who intended to submit an alternative route to the draft Orders for the A303 Trunk Road (Stonehenge Improvement) should do so by 19 December 2003. An alternative, locally known at the 'Parker Plan or Parker Route', has been received and will be considered before an independent inspector at the public inquiry.

UK Sport

Mr. Hawkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the recent decisions made by UK Sport concerning *(a)* the departure of leading officials in sports administration and *(b)* sports funding. [150641]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* UK Sport recently made the following announcements:

(a) Richard Callicott has stood down as Chief Executive. Liz Nicholl was appointed in his place, with effect from December 2003.

(b) UK Sport recently announced changes in its sport funding arrangements. 10 sports have been agreed across the Sports Councils as being of UK wide significance from participation through to success.

The aim is to support the 10 sports in the development of a One Plan, providing more effective linkages between their UK and home country governing bodies.

This approach will provide sports with a simplified funding process and help foster improved co-ordination, communication and consultation between UK and home country governing bodies and their partners.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Chope: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will take action to ensure that payments of civil service pensions by Capita Hartshead to retired civil servants resident in France enjoy the same rate of exchange as payments of the state pension; and if he will make a statement. [150877]

Mr. Alexander: The rate of exchange for payments in overseas currency is determined by the UK banks responsible for the conversion. The rates offered on any one day may vary from bank to bank, and within each bank depending on the terms and conditions applicable to each customer. However, in view of the relative volume of payments to state pensioners resident overseas, it is unlikely that any bank would offer exactly the same terms and conditions to an occupational pension scheme as those agreed for the state scheme.

The bank responsible for converting overseas payments for occupational pension schemes administered by Capita Hartshead regularly monitors its rates against those offered by competitors, including those responsible for converting payments for other occupational pension schemes, to ensure it offers a competitive service.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Angola

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the Government of Angola about ensuring *(a)* greater transparency in the management of oil revenues and *(b)* that oil revenues are focused on social programmes in that country. [150111]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government are active in promoting greater transparency in oil revenue management in Angola, including through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative launched by the Prime Minister at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. We are currently in discussions with the Angolan Ministry of Finance on providing technical support so that Angola can develop and adopt legislation to implement the Initiative.

The UK is also supporting the World Bank's programme to promote greater transparency in the Angolan oil industry. Specifically, DFID is funding an oil expert to take part in the Bank's Public Expenditure Management and Financial Accountability Review (PEMFAR). The results of this review should help clarify financial relationships between the Government, the Central Bank and the state oil company Sonangol. It will also make recommendations on how Angola can adopt transparent, internationally accepted practices in oil revenue management. Finally, the UK is demonstrating its commitment to strengthening Angolan civil society by supporting a coalition of national NGOs active in advocating on transparency issues including oil revenue management.

Greater fiscal transparency in Angola is only one element in ensuring that more public resources are spent on reducing poverty. With this in mind, DFID funded an economist to help prepare Angola's first ever three-year macro-economic framework which has since been incorporated into the recently published Angolan draft Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The macro-economic framework income is assisting the Government to plan spending increases in the social sectors.

The UK will continue to work with the Government and people of Angola to ensure that greater transparency in oil revenue management is converted into tangible programmes for poverty reduction.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many Angolan refugees in Zambia he estimates will reject the voluntary repatriation programme; and what assessment he has made of the impact this will have on *(a)* the humanitarian requirements in Zambia and *(b)* the humanitarian requirements in Angola. [150108]

Hilary Benn: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimate that at 30 November 2003 there were a total of 167,184 Angolan refugees in Zambia.

Under their voluntary repatriation programme, UNHCR estimate that 20,000 Angolans refugees would be repatriated in 2003 and 40,000 in 2004. It is too early to predict how many will reject the voluntary repatriation programme. This will become clearer during the course of 2004, and in the light of UNHCR's discussions with the Government of Zambia over the rights of Angolans to remain in Zambia legally.

Burundi

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 929W, on Burundi, what assessment he has made of the levels of cholera in the Cibitoke region of Burundi since December 2003. [150103]

Hilary Benn: My previous answer was based on information available at that time from the World Health Organisation (WHO). Since then the WHO in Bujumbura has reported 127 cases of cholera, including four deaths in Cibitoke Province since 5 December 2003. The situation is now under control with only one case reported in the past week.

WHO has also reported that during the past two weeks there have been 35 reported cases of suspected cholera including one death in the province of Bururi. WHO are assessing the situation.

Congo

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if his Department will *(a)* arrange and *(b)* fund a delegation of senior former Members of Parliament to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to advise on democracy building. [149192]

Hilary Benn: We are in discussion with Members of the Congolese Parliament, groups outside Parliament and the Westminster Foundation here, about the best ways in which the UK can support the strengthening of democracy during the transition in the DRC. For example, we are just beginning an important project with the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa to help develop frameworks for political party development and the democratic functioning of the Parliament. We are also currently considering support to the constitutional process, and possible visits by Congolese politicians to other countries to focus on particular issues of interest. We will keep in view whether a visit by senior former Members of Parliament would be a priority activity for democratic development in the DRC during the short transitional period.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the ability of the Democratic Republic of Congo to hold a general election in 2005; and if he will make a statement. [150109]

Hilary Benn: The Electoral Assistance Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs recently completed a feasibility study to assist the transitional Congolese authorities to identify a comprehensive set of options for organising and conducting elections in 2005. The objective is to ensure that the transitional government receives the support necessary to enable it to hold a successful general election at that stage. Experts from the European Commission are also advising the government on options, in consultation with the rest of the international community. DFID is participating in these discussions.

Iraq

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what amounts were spent by his Department on *(a)* reconstruction of civilian infrastructure and *(b)* humanitarian relief in the first 100 days following the end of high intensity military operations in Iraq. [150222]

Hilary Benn: In the first 100 days after military operations, DFID pledged £100 million to the United Nations Consolidated Appeal. Of this, £65 million was allocated to specific humanitarian programmes including £16 million to the reconstruction of civilian infrastructure. In the same period, DFID committed £32 million to the Red Cross and £6 million to NGOs for humanitarian relief.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much of the money pledged by the UK Government at the Madrid Conference has been *(a)* allocated to reconstruction projects in Iraq and *(b)* remains uncommitted; and how much money his Department plans to spend in Iraq in each of the next five years. [151156]

Hilary Benn: To date, DFID has committed £220 million towards humanitarian and reconstruction work in Iraq, £188 million of which has been allocated to specific activities.

At the Madrid Conference in October, the UK made a total financial pledge towards Iraq's reconstruction of £544 million for the three years from April 2003. That figure included £38 million as our share of projected European Community spending in Iraq.

In the current financial year, DFID and other Government Department spending is expected to total £312 million, including £23 million as our share of EC spending. Future UK contributions to Iraq reconstruction are expected to be £134 million in 2004–05 and £98 million in 2005–06. Of these figures, the DFID programme for Iraq reconstruction is expected to account for £91 million and £86 million respectively. The balance is made up of the UK share of currently agreed European Community aid, and other UK Government programmes including the Global Conflict Prevention Pool which is jointly managed by DFID, the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

No decisions have yet been taken on spending on Iraq beyond 2005–06.

Nigeria

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the supplies of anti-retroviral drugs in Nigeria; and what steps he will take to assist in the event of a shortfall. [150113]

Hilary Benn: Supplies of anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs in Nigeria are critically low. Most hospitals have run out of ARVs over the past months. This is due to delays in

the release of Government funds, and because over 14,000 people were started on a treatment programme designed for 10,000.

In order to address the situation, President Obassanjo recently approved an extra £2 million for ARVs, and a supply contract is currently being awarded. It is expected that the Global Fund will provide £25 million worth of ARVs, and further supplies have been promised by the United States and the World Health Organisation.

However, ensuring reliable ARV treatment is not just a question of supply, it is also about strengthening the health system. The Nigerian Health Minister has developed an excellent strategy for reform of the health sector' which DFID plans to support. We are in addition providing £1 million to the National Action Committee on AIDS, which is coordinating the national response.

Preferential Access

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the European Commission proposal that the G20 be invited to give preferential access to products from the poorest countries. [146600]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have been asked to reply.

All exports from least developed countries (LDCs), with the exception of arms, currently enjoy duty and quota free access to the European Union market under the Everything-but-Arms argument (EBA). Other G8 countries have similar but less extensive arrangements.

The Government fully supports the commitment by the World Trade Organisation, made in the Doha Declaration in November 2001, to seek an agreement with 'the objective of duty-free, quota-free market access for products originating from LDCs', and the further commitment 'to consider additional measures for progressive improvements in market access for LDCs'. We encourage all members of the World Trade Organisation to deliver on that commitment.

South Africa

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures are in place to provide the poorest families of South Africa with *(a)* water, *(b)* power and *(c)* health facilities. [150343]

Hilary Benn: Since the democratic elections in 1994, the South African Government has made extending services to the poor a priority. Their recent review of progress over the last 10 years concludes that much has been achieved while recognising that more remains to be done.

Since 1994, 8.4 million people have gained access to water, and the government has introduced a Free Basic Water policy under which poor households are entitled to 6,000 litres of water per month free of charge. 3.8 million households have been connected to the electricity grid and the Free Basic Electricity policy entitles poor households to 50 kilowatt hours of electricity per month free of charge. Free access to primary health care has been introduced and investment in health infrastructure has increased significantly.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to his Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149333]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development actively promotes the better regulation agenda and the use of sunsetting where appropriate. Two Acts of Parliament have been sponsored by DFID since 1997. They are the Commonwealth Development Corporation Act 1999 and the International Development Act 2002. Neither contained sunset clauses.

Zimbabwe

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on malaria levels in Zimbabwe. [150107]

Hilary Benn: In recent months, reported numbers of malaria cases and malaria deaths have been close to the seasonal average. However, the risk of a serious worsening of the malaria situation is increasing owing to incomplete coverage of routine prevention measures and inadequate stocks of antimalarial drugs as the rainy season progresses and the peak season for malaria approaches.

The ability of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Welfare to control malaria is currently threatened by lack of staff and lack of access to foreign currency for purchase of insecticides and drugs. Zimbabwe is one of the countries that benefits from a grant of £17.3 million over six years provided by DFID to the Africa Regional Office of the World Health Organisation for the purpose of accelerating action to control malaria and childhood illness.

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1319, on Iraq, when he was first informed of the lack of chemical filters on the tanks and armoured vehicles; what action he took as a result, and when; and when he was informed of the inability of tank crews and crews of other armoured vehicles to wear their personal NBC kit when in their tanks and armoured vehicles. [151432]

The Prime Minister: In the first instance, issues of this kind are for force commanders in theatre. Troops are trained to operate armoured vehicles wearing their personal NBC equipment, irrespective of whether the vehicle has a collective NBC protection system.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister if he will instruct the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to answer named day questions on the day specified. [150236]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer the Under-Secretary of State, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister gave to him on 26 January.

Vice-chancellor (Buckingham University)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his Oral Answer of 21 January to the right hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), if he will *(a)* name the publication from which or person from whom he sourced the quotation from the vice-chancellor and *(b)* make a statement on the accuracy of the vice-chancellor's quotation. [151473]

The Prime Minister: The quotation was taken from an article published in *The Guardian* on Friday 12 December 2003. Copies have been placed in the Library in the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iraq

5. **Laura Moffatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made towards democratic elections in Iraq. [150691]

Mr. Straw: We are committed to the establishment of a democratic Iraq. On 15 November 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council announced a process for achieving this. This envisages the creation of a sovereign transitional government by 30 June 2004, the holding of direct elections to a Constitutional Convention by March 2005, and, following approval of the constitution, the holding of full democratic elections by the end of 2005. The UN Secretary-General has agreed to consider sending a technical team to Iraq to examine the feasibility of holding elections to the Transitional National Assembly, a move which we welcome.

A committee of the Governing Council drafted the Statute for the Special Tribunal with assistance from, among others, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Office of Human rights and Transitional Justice. The UK provided comments on the Statute through the UK Special Representative for Iraq's office and the CPA Office of Human Rights and Transitional Justice. Our comments and advice were focused mainly on the application of international law and the scope of the Tribunal. This drew on the experience of our involvement in other Tribunals including the ICTY, ICTR and Sierra Leone. The UK is considering requests for further assistance.

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total value is of *(a)* contracts so far issued to British companies working on the reconstruction of Iraq and *(b)* contracts expected to be issued in the next six months. [150608]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: British companies have won significant sub-contracts for the reconstruction process in Iraq. However, most of the contracting authorities in Iraq do not publish information on contracts awarded, and companies are not required to notify HMG of contracts won. I am unable to give a total value for contracts awarded to UK companies.

The Program Management Office of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) will run an open tender process; a number of UK companies are bidding. Sub-contracting opportunities are also likely to arise from this process.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has *(a)* to second (i) electoral registration officers and (ii) other officials and *(b)* to provide resources to enable the Iraqi Governing Council to facilitate free and fair elections; and if he will make a statement. [150216]

Mr. Rammell: At a meeting in New York on 19 January between the Iraqi Governing Council and the coalition, Kofi Annan undertook to consider sending a UN technical team to Iraq to look into the feasibility of holding elections. Once we have seen their recommendations, we will consider any requests for assistance.

Israel

18. **John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage *(a)* the Israeli Government to dismantle settlements in the Occupied Territories and *(b)* the Palestinian Authority to prevent further suicide attacks in Israel. [150704]

Mr. Rammell: The Government regularly presses the Israeli Government to freeze settlement activity and dismantle outposts in line with Israel's commitments under the Roadmap.

We also reiterate at every opportunity the need for the Palestinian Authority to take visible steps to degrade terrorist capabilities. My noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean did so in the Occupied Territories on 21–23 January.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the information bulletin being issued to foreign nationals arriving in Israel which informs them that they now require written prior authorisation from the Israeli Government to visit territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority and that failure to obtain such authorisation many result in legal action being taken against them by Israel. [149886]

Mr. Rammell: We are aware of the information bulletin, which has been issued to foreign nationals arriving in Israel, and are seriously concerned at the possible impact of such restrictions on media, humanitarian organisations, and civil society groups operating in the Occupied Territories. We have raised our concerns with the Israeli Government, and are exploring with our EU partners further avenues for doing so.

As Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice makes clear, we still advise against travel to the West Bank and Gaza, along Israel's border with Lebanon, and close to the Israeli side of the Israel/Gaza border.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what mechanisms the Israeli Government used to consult the United Kingdom before issuing warnings to British citizens and other foreign nationals arriving in Israel that entry to territories

under the control of the Palestinian Authority is now forbidden without written prior authorisation from the Israeli Government and stating that entry to those territories without such written authorisation may result in legal action being taken; and what representations he is making to Israel on the issue. [149935]

Mr. Rammell: The Israeli Government did not consult directly with the United Kingdom about the entry changes referred to in warnings to foreign nationals arriving in Israel. We have raised our concerns with the Israeli Government, about the possible impact of such restrictions on media, humanitarian organisations, and civil society groups operating in the Occupied Territories, and are exploring with our EU partners further avenues for doing so.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether there are alternative entry points to those controlled by the Israeli military for British passport holders visiting territories under the administration of the Palestinian Authority; and what assessment he has made of the implications for the freedom of movement of British passport holders of the introduction by Israel of regulations forbidding foreign nationals entry to Palestinian territories without written prior authorisation from the Israeli Government and stating that entry to those territories without such written authorisation may result in legal action being taken. [149940]

Mr. Rammell: There are no alternative entry points to the Occupied Territories to those covered by the new regulations. We have raised our concerns with the Israeli Government about the possible impact of such restrictions on media, humanitarian organisations, and civil society groups operating in the Occupied Territories, and are exploring with our EU partners further avenues for doing so.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he plans to have with his EU counterparts about the introduction by Israel of regulations forbidding foreign nationals entry to territories under the control of the Palestinian Authority without written prior authorisation from the Israeli Government. [150132]

Mr. Rammell: The Government have raised the issue of changes to entry regulations for the Occupied Territories with fellow EU members. They share our concerns about the possible impact of such restrictions on media, humanitarian organisations, and civil society groups operating in the area. We have raised our concerns with the Israeli Government and are exploring with our EU partners further avenues for doing so.

Guantanamo Bay

19. **Mr. Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in securing proper judicial process for the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. [150706]

Mr. Mullin: The focus of the Government's discussions with the United States Administration has been on how to resolve the position of the British nationals detained at Guantanamo Bay. All legal proceedings against the British detainees are currently suspended. The Government have made clear to the United States our view that any trial procedure the British detainees may face must be fair and meet generally recognised principles.

The position on the Government's discussions with the US remains as the Prime Minister explained to the House on 7 January.

> "Talks are continuing on the issue...I hope that we will shortly be able to tell the House how the issue will be handled."

Hamdi Acikgoz

20. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the application by Mr. Hamdi Acikgoz, in Istanbul, for a visa to visit the United Kingdom. [150707]

Mr. Mullin: As my hon. Friend is aware I cannot disclose details of individual entry clearance cases. I am therefore withholding the information requested under Exemption 5 of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. I wrote to my hon. Friend about this case on 23 December. I would be happy to discuss it further with him privately.

Occupied Territories

21. **Richard Burden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received concerning restrictions on movement within and into the Occupied Palestinian Territories by *(a)* Palestinians and *(b)* foreign nationals; and if he will make a statement. [150708]

Mr. Rammell: We have received a number of representations from MPs, Peers, non-governmental organisations and members of the public concerning restrictions on movement within and into the Occupied Territories for both Palestinians and foreign nationals. Palestinian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nabil Sha'ath, also raised his concerns about the impact of the fence, which contributes to curtailed freedom of movement, with the Foreign Secretary on 8 January.

We remain deeply concerned about the consequences for freedom of movement into and within the Occupied Territories for Palestinians and foreign nationals resulting from Israeli actions, including the imposition of curfews and closures, construction of the fence and introduction of access controls, including permits. We continue to call on the Government of Israel to do all it can to ease movement restrictions. We have raised the recently introduced entry regulations with the Israeli government and are exploring with our EU partners further avenues for doing so.

The Netherlands

22. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Dutch Government on prospects for a referendum in the Netherlands on a proposed European Constitution; and if he will make a statement. [150709]

Mr. MacShane: I have regular discussions with my EU counterparts on a wide range of aspects of the IGC. The question of whether to hold a referendum on

the Constitutional Treaty is a matter for individual governments themselves, according to their constitutional traditions.

As I have made clear in the House before, we have no plans to hold a referendum.

Palestinian Authority

23. **David Cairns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Palestinian Authority concerning terrorism. [150710]

Mr. Rammell: We regularly discuss the security situation with our contacts at all levels in the Palestinian Authority.

Most recently, my noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean discussed the need for the Palestinian Authority to fulfil its roadmap commitments on security, and intensify its efforts to tackle groups and individuals engaging in terrorist activity when she visited the Occupied Territories on 21–23 January.

Burma

24. **Mr. Luke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Burma. [150711]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We remain concerned about the political situation in Burma. Although the Burmese regime's plans for a National Convention are a step forward, the process needs to be inclusive and transparent, involving representatives from the democratic opposition and the ethnic groups. Convention participants must be allowed full freedom of speech, movement and political activity. As a first step Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her NLD colleagues must be fully released and NLD offices re-opened.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150287]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office occupies a total of 54,558 square metres in central London, and 3,116 square metres in Greater London.

Ethiopia/Eritrea

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the visit by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to Ethiopia and Eritrea. [150112]

Mr. Mullin: I visited Ethiopia and Eritrea from 13 to 19 January. My programme included meetings with President Isaias of Eritrea and Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia. We discussed a range of issues, including the border dispute between the two countries. I stressed the importance of avoiding any return to war, implementing the Boundary Commission decision, and building confidence between the two parties by the establishment of a dialogue.

European Constitution

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what form minutes were taken of the Intergovernmental Conference on the European Constitution; who took them; to whom they are available; and where they are available. [150196]

Mr. MacShane: No minutes were taken of any meetings during the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), although the Italian presidency published revised Treaty texts following some of the meetings. These are available on the Italian presidency website: www.ueitalia.it The European Council Conclusions issued by the Italian presidency are the only formal statement of progress in the IGC to date.

European Union

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's position is on the United Kingdom's rebate in the context of the negotiations on the EU's multi-annual financial framework; and if he will make a statement. [150781]

Mr. MacShane: Initial discussion of the next financial perspective should begin next month, after the Commission publishes its future financing communication. The current financial perspective expires at the end of 2006, and the Government look forward to the successful negotiation of a new financial perspective, for the period beginning in 2007. The Government believe that the rebate remains fully justified as a fair means of redressing the UK's disproportionate high net contribution to the EC Budget.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to implement the transitional restrictions which the UK can apply in regard to the nationals of the EU accession countries. [151067]

Mr. MacShane: Under the EU Accession Treaty, nationals of Cyprus and Malta have the same rights to work in another member state as are currently enjoyed by nationals of the existing member states. However, nationals of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia ("the eight relevant states" are subject to transitional provisions.

Under the transitional arrangements, until 30 April 2006 member states are free to apply national measures or bilateral agreements restricting the rights of nationals from the eight relevant states to work in their country. From 1 May 2006, member states must either grant these nationals the right to move freely for the purpose of work in accordance with Community law, or continue to apply national measures or bilateral agreements. Any grant of this right may, however, be subject to suspensions if the member state undergoes or foresees disturbances to its labour market which could seriously threaten the standard of living or level of employment in a particular region or occupation Such suspensions may last, at the latest, until 30 April 2011.

In line with its announcement of December 2002, the Government intend to grant citizens of the eight relevant states the right to work freely in the UK labour market from 1 May 2004. Section 2 of the EU (Accessions) Act 2003 provides a power to make regulations to give effect to this decision. The Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000/2326), which currently implement Community law rights of European Economic Area (EEA) nationals to enter and reside in the UK, will be applied to nationals of the eight relevant states as they apply to nationals of the EEA.

From accession the Government will be monitoring the effect of their decision on the UK labour market. In the unexpected event of a large influx of workers to the UK, which seriously threaten the level of employment or standard of living in a particular region or occupation, there are safeguards available to re-impose restrictions on workers. The Government could, in the normal way, re-impose restrictions on some or all of the eight relevant states by repealing or suspending the application of any regulations made under the Act and could exclude nationals of one or more of the eight relevant states from the right to work in the UK under powers contained in the Act.

Genocide

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the international community is taking to prevent crimes of genocide. [151157]

Mr. Rammell: The creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on 11 March 2003 is an important step forward by the international community to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The court has jurisdiction over crimes committed since 1 July 2002. The UK is a strong supporter of the court. Our objective is to work for global ratification of the ICC Statute so that the court enjoys the widest possible remit.

I am attending the Stockholm Forum on the Prevention of Genocide from 26–28 January 2004, at which more than 30 states will discuss possible measures to prevent genocide. The UK is supporting the Forum Declaration, which seeks to build consensus around how the international community can best carry forward this agenda.

Gibraltar

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Government policy on Gibraltar. [150432]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) on 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1417.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in his Department. [150933]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office uses a number of means to determine whether its IT is being used properly. These include:

constantly monitoring activity on the IT infrastructure system, Firecrest, including access to websites, and following up any unusual activity;

information systems audits by our internal audit department;

requiring all IT users to read and complete an annual certificate of compliance with the security operating procedures; and

checks by IT security advisers that security operating procedures are being followed.

Post implementation reviews are conducted after a project to deliver new IT has finished, to assess whether the expected benefits are being achieved. The way the system is being used is one aspect of this assessment.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151050]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Centre of Excellence was established in June 2003 in accordance with Office of Government Commerce guidelines. It has had a positive impact in improving programme and project management across the FCO, but cost savings cannot be calculated at this early stage.

International Criminal Court

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the *(a)* budget and *(b)* UK contribution to the budget for the International Criminal Court (i) is for the current year and (ii) will be for each of the next five years; and if he will make a statement. [150219]

Mr. Rammell: The total International Criminal Court (ICC) budget for the calendar year 2004 is approximately £39.5 million. The UK is expected to contribute some 11 per cent. of this sum i.e. approximately £4.3 million.

The ICC budgets for the next five years have yet to be set. The Court has not yet reached its full establishment and its caseload also remains an unknown budgetary factor.

The United Kingdom nevertheless remains committed to maintaining the strictest possible budgetary control and ensuring the ICC makes the most effective use of the funds at its disposal.

The United Nations' scales of assessments, on which the UK contribution is based, are recalculated every two years and follow the general principle of capacity to pay. We would not expect great fluctuation in this rate.

Libya

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new resources he is committing to assist Libya is undertaking the disarmament and dismantling of its weapons of mass destruction and related research and production infrastructure. [147027]

Mr. MacShane: We have made it clear that we are prepared to offer assistance with the dismantlement of Libyan programmes, but at this stage it is impossible to quantify what resources it may be necessary to commit. There are already a number of sources of funding for global co-operative threat reduction programmes. If it is necessary to allocate additional resources in order to assist Libya in the destruction of its weapons programmes we will do so, as we believe that money spent on reducing the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction is money well spent.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when Her Majesty's Government first confirmed that Libya was developing nuclear weapons contrary to its commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); when the United Kingdom informed the governments of the two other depository states for the NPT of its knowledge of Libya's breach of its NPT commitments; when the United Kingdom first informed *(a)* the Director General and *(b)* board members of the International Atomic Energy Agency of its knowledge of Libya's nuclear programme; and what information he has collated on the suppliers of Libya's nuclear weapons programme. [147029]

Mr. MacShane: We have had concerns for some time about Libya's nuclear programme and first raised the matter in the course of discussions with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in late 2001, and again in mid 2002. Libya is now in contact with the IAEA and it will be for Libya to make a national declaration providing the full details of its programme to the IAEA. The IAEA will then proceed to verify the extent and nature of Libya's covert nuclear activity. Only the IAEA, acting within its remit can underwrite Libya's commitment to stop this activity. We are working in close co-operation with both the Libyan authorities and the IAEA to move this process forward.

Overseas Territories

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent communications he has had with the governments of the *(a)* overseas territories and *(b)* crown dependencies. [150424]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary addressed and exchanged views with Chief Ministers and Government leaders of the UK Overseas Territories at the annual Overseas Territories Consultative Council meeting in London on 10 December 2003.

He has had no recent communications with the crown dependencies. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs is responsible for the United Kingdom's relations with the crown dependencies.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how often he communicated with the governments of Britain's overseas territories in the last three years. [150428]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary visited Gibraltar in May 2002, and has been in direct contact with the Chief Minister on several occasions over the last three years. He communicated directly with the governments of the other overseas territories when he addressed Chief Ministers and their equivalents at the annual Overseas Territories Consultative Council in London on 10 December 2003.

I maintain regular contact with the overseas territories as does my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe as Minister of State responsible for Gibraltar. Governors, of course, are in constant contact with the governments of the overseas territories.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of administering Britain's overseas territories is in 2003–04. [150430]

Mr. Rammell: According to the published, audited 2002–03 Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Resource Accounts, available in the Library of the House, the total cost of supporting the overseas territories in 2002–03 was approximately £21 million (ref: Objective 9, Schedule 57 FCO Resource Accounts). This is the full economic cost of supporting the overseas territories, and represents the cost of the total effort expended at post/missions and in the UK of supporting the overseas territories. The costs in 2003–04 are expected to be about the same.

It is not possible to quantify the costs to other Government Departments of their role in administering the overseas territories.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit overseas territories over the next year. [150431]

Mr. Rammell: Overseas engagements for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel.

I visited Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands in November 2003, and I hope to visit others in the future. My hon. Friend the Minister for Europe visited Gibraltar in July 2003.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the London office of the governments of *(a)* the Falkland Islands, *(b)* Gibraltar and *(c)* the Cayman Islands during the last 12 months. [150433]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no direct discussions with the London offices of the governments of the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar or the Cayman Islands during the last 12 months. The Foreign Secretary addressed the Overseas Territories Consultative Council in December 2003, which the London representatives attended.

I met the London representatives at the Overseas Territories Consultative Council last December. The London representative of the Falkland Islands Government also attended a meeting between myself and Falkland Island Councillor Richard Cockwell in June 2003. I will have a further opportunity to meet the representatives at a lunch prior to the UK Overseas Territories Association AGM next month.

State Visits

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what plans he has to accompany Her Majesty the Queen on State visits in the next two years; [150387]

(2) what overseas visits are planned for Her Majesty the Queen during the next two years. [150390]

Mr. Straw: Her Majesty The Queen announced in her Gracious Speech at the State Opening of Parliament that she is to make a State Visit to France from 5 to 7 April 2004 to mark the official start of events commemorating the Centenary of the Entente Cordiale. I will accompany her on that visit.

At the Anglo/French summit on 24 November 2003, Her Majesty was invited by President Chirac of France to attend the 60th anniversary commemoration of the Normandy Landings on 6 June.

Beyond that, the forward programme of visits by Her Majesty is not yet finalised. In the normal course of events I would accompany Her Majesty on State Visits, as I did on Her Majesty's State visit to Nigeria in December 2003.

Ukraine

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what records *(a)* his Department has and *(b)* have been released on the extent to which the Department was aware of the scale of loss of life as a result of Soviet policy in the Ukraine in 1932–33; whether all relevant documentation has been released; and if he will make a statement. [150926]

Mr. MacShane: Records relating to Soviet policy in the Ukraine in 1932–33 are contained in the archives of the Foreign Office's then Northern Department. There are approximately 65 files, all of which have long been in the public domain at The National Archives. No papers have been withheld from these files. Indeed, some documents pertaining to the famine were published in the FCO's official series "Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–39" in 1958 (Series II, Volume VII).

UN Security Council Resolution 1325

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is in relation to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, with particular reference to Iraq and Afghanistan. [150773]

Mr. Rammell: The United Kingdom is committed to working towards the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and ensuring that the necessary mechanisms are in place for monitoring progress.

The situation of Afghan women and girls has developed significantly in the last two years. On 5 March 2003, Afghanistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

23 per cent. of the delegates to the Constitutional Loya Jirga were women from across Afghanistan. Articles 22, 43 and 44 of the new constitution, agreed on 4 January, establish equal rights for men and women, which also reflected many of the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women. The Afghan Transitional Administration and international community are committed to providing the security and resources needed to support implementation of the new constitution, and to develop effective mechanisms to tackle continuing human rights violations and abuses, including those against women.

The UK is working to encourage Afghan women to take their rightful role in the forthcoming elections. This includes ensuring that women and men are included in voter registration programmes, that they develop the capacities to participate as campaigners and officials and that women are empowered to take advantage of their quotas for representation in Parliament.

We are also supporting the Afghan Judicial Commission in its work to improve access to justice for all Afghan communities, taking into account the special needs of women.

The UK actively seeks to deploy female British officers to peacekeeping missions and other conflict prevention/resolution operations. This has included a senior gender expert working with the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Baghdad, We try to ensure that those members of the various UK teams in Iraq, especially those working in or with the CPA, are fully briefed on the gender aspects of their work. The UK's Special Representative, Sir Jeremy Greenstock recently met my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Minister for Women and Equality, a representative group of Iraqi women, and representatives of UK non-governmental organisations, including the Women's National Commission, active in the field.

Encouraging Iraqi women to participate fully in the reconstruction of their country is a key aim of the Government's conflict prevention strategy for Iraq.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Reinstatement Committees

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 922W, on reinstatement committees, if she will make a statement on the training regime undergone by members of employment tribunals, with particular reference to reinstatement committees. [150208]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There is little to add to my previous answer. The chairmen of employment tribunals are trained to research the relevant law as necessary before any hearing and to give guidance to the lay members on the relevant legal principles and their application to any particular case.

Business Link

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Business Link organisations are in operation; and how much money was spent by each of them in each year since their formation. [148197]

Nigel Griffiths: There are 42 Business Link Operators (BLOs) delivering local business support services in 45 sub-regions in England, with three BLOs operating in two areas.

The following table shows the total expenditure on BL branded activity by sub region including that supported by non-DTI funding, for the last two financial years. The Business Link network was re-engineered and the new BLOs operational from 26 March 2001.

BLO expenditure 2001–02 and 2002–03

£

BLO sub-region	*Expenditure 2001–02*	*2002–03*
North East		
County Durham	2,652,539	3,441,153
Northumberland	2,300,765	2,878,904
Tees Valley	4,141,342	5,088,231
Tyne and Wear	5,736,800	9,064,600
North West		
Cumbria	22,221,795	3,859,512
North and Western Lancashire	4,192,499	5,917,278
East Lancashire	2,715,866	4,362,073
Cheshire and Warrington	4,978,535	4,551,754
Chamber Business Enterprises (Manchester)	8,492,135	9,777,677
North Manchester	6,891,700	7,471,532
Merseyside	5,736,436	7,629,197
Yorkshire and Humberside		
West Yorkshire	5,637,164	11,184,242
South Yorkshire	8,910,014	17,458,068
North Yorkshire	3,085,540	4,661,500
Humberside	2,575,720	5,738,901
East Midlands		
Derbyshire	4,782,666	4,697,023
Leicestershire—Holistico	4,188,328	4,875,594
Lincolnshire and Rutland	5,313,827	4,844,585
Northamptonshire	2,296,407	3,043,415
Nottinghamshire	5,042,214	4,005,441
West Midlands		
Birmingham	21,286,000	15,048,000
Black Country	6,183,900	6,854,503
Coventry and Warwickshire	7,271,320	6,115,000
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	6,787,260	8,530,417
Staffordshire	5,031,346	5,744,896
Shropshire	7,403,534	5,564,642
Eastern		
Bedford and Luton	2,762,644	2,899,920
Cambridgeshire	2,874,000	3,315,500
Essex	6,515,145	7,185,428
Hertfordshire	7,462,930	8,191,000
Norfolk	3,182,360	4,441,582
Suffolk	3,638,867	4,149,373
London		
London	36,966,000	38,236,000
South East		
Berkshire	4,546,742	3,970,419
Milton Keynes, Oxford, Buckinghamshire	5,739,010	5,741,967
Sussex	7,706,000	6,986,000
Hampshire	6,332,070	6,974,849
Kent	9,763,000	9,532,683
Surrey	5,727,780	6,207,269
South West		
Devon and Cornwall	21,168,965	11,280,448
Dorset	3,344,765	3,250,151
West	4,894,858	5,696,502
Gloucestershire	4,708,576	4,001,183
Somerset	3,382,154	3,151,337
Wiltshire	3,720,061	3,472,052

Based upon quarterly financial returns provided by BLOs to the Small Business Service, DTI.

Emissions Trading Directive

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding the EU Emissions Trading Directive. [147603]

Mr. Timms: Defra and DTI have a joint public service agreement that commits to moving towards a 20 per cent. reduction in CO_2 emissions by 2010. The EU ETS represents a central element in Government plans for reducing emissions. DTI and Defra have worked together very closely, with other Government Departments and the Devolved Administrations, to ensure that the appropriate arrangements are in place for the successful implementation of the EU ETS.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the impact that the EU Emissions Trading Directive will have on the United Kingdom glass industry. [147609]

Mr. Timms: The EU Emissions trading scheme (ETS) is a cost-effective approach to ensuring emissions of greenhouse gas fall to target levels. The impact on individual sectors has been considered during work to prepare for the introduction of the EU ETS. A draft National Allocation Plan has been released and sectors will be able to comment on the allocation proposed for them. Analytical work on the competitiveness implications will also be released shortly.

Insolvency Service

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed by the Insolvency Service; and how many were employed in 1997. [151009]

Mr. Sutcliffe: As at 1 January 2004, the full time equivalent number of staff employed by the Insolvency Service was 1,634.

The number of staff employed in the Insolvency Service in earlier years is published in the agency's Annual Report and Accounts.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what complaints she has received on the operation of the Insolvency Service in the last three years. [151010]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The number of complaints received by the Insolvency Service in the last three years, and the nature of those complaints, is set out in the following table:

Nature of complaint	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Quality	350	400	342
Efficiency	86	43	32
Legislation	190	97	61

Internet Usage

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to encourage use of the internet by those who have said that a lack of *(a)* knowledge, *(b)* confidence and *(c)* interest was a barrier to use. [146142]

Mr. Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

A network of over 6,000 UK online centres offer free or low cost internet access, especially for those who may need additional support to get online. A December 2003 report on CMF funded centres, found that centres are successfully helping users improve their confidence (79 per cent.) and learn new skills (84 per cent.). The 'Get Started' campaign, which promoted the benefits of the internet to disinterested groups, helped drive nearly 37,000 people to UK online centres for a free internet starter session.

We have recently published guidelines to help employers implement Home Computing Initiatives. HCI schemes promote home computer access and use which can help reach out to individuals who are less confident with technology.

IT Contracts

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list information technology contracts in her Department with a value of above £20 million in each of the last 10 years; what the inception date for each system was; when it became fully functional; when it became fully debugged; and what the cost of over-runs has been. [146202]

Mr. Timms: The Department has directly let one IT contract with a lifetime value of more than £20 million in the last 10 years. This is the ELGAR PFI contract for the provision of IT desktop, application support and development, and business re-engineering services. The contract was awarded on 27 November 1998 and the initial desk top service became operational on 31 March 1999, as planned. System Acceptance testing of the new desk top service was completed on 30 November 1999, and the system became fully functional on 31 March 2000. Following user acceptance testing, the system was accepted by the Department and the system was fully debugged by 15 July 2000. There were no additional costs to the Department for over-runs on this migration.

A Service for the provision of Electronic Records Management was also supplied under the ELGAR contract. The inception date for this was 30 March 2001, the system became fully functional on 30 November 2001 and it was fully debugged by 30 April 2002. There was no overun on costs.

Manufacturing Employment

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many manufacturing jobs have been *(a)* created and *(b)* lost in (i) Cambridgeshire and (ii) Huntingdon in each of the last three years. [146447]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Djanogly, dated 27 January 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on manufacturing jobs in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon. (146447)

Figures are not available for jobs created or lost, but the net changes from year to year in numbers of jobs can be determined from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI). The most recent figures available are set out in the attached table.

Net annual change in number of manufacturing jobs in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon, 2000–02

	Cambridgeshire	*Huntingdon Local Authority District*
2000	196	-322
2001	70	-576
2002	-1,299	-887

As with any sample survey, estimates from the ABI are subject to sampling variability.

Market Access

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether it is her policy to seek to extend duty-free and quota-free access for all least developed countries exports into all developed countries as part of a development friendly agreement with the World Trade Organisation. [146642]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: All exports from least developed countries (LDCs), with the exception of arms, currently enjoy duty and quota free access to the European Union market under the Everything-but-Arms argument (EBA). Other G8 countries have similar but less extensive arrangements.

The Government fully support the commitment by the World Trade Organisation, made in the Doha Declaration in November 2001, to seek an agreement with 'the objective of duty-free, quota-free market access for products originating from LDCs', and the further commitment 'to consider additional measures for progressive improvements in market access for LDCs'. We encourage all members of the World Trade Organisation to deliver on that commitment.

Post Office Account Cards

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will set out the circumstances in which her Department authorises Post Office counter clerks to *(a)* reject and *(b)* confiscate Post Office account cards; and on how many occasions this has happened. [150878]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The Department of Trade and Industry has no role in the operation of the Post Office card account, which is a

commercial matter that falls within the day-to-day responsibility of Post Office Ltd. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Post Offices

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices have closed in Brent in each year since 1979. [149896]

Mr. Timms: Decisions on post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon Member.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices there were in England and Wales *(a)* in 1996 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [150053]

Mr. Timms: I understand from Post Office Ltd. that as at end September 2003, the latest quarter for which figures are currently available, that the numbers of post offices in England was 12,938 and Wales was 1,318.

The Department does not have the corresponding historical figures for 1996 and I have asked the Chief Executive of the company to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the outcome was of each of the completed public consultations on proposed post office closures in Wales. [150102]

Mr. Timms: Decisions on post office closure proposals following public consultation are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent by each of the regional development agencies in each year since their formation. [148191]

Jacqui Smith: Eight RDAs were established in 1998 and their first full year of operation was in 1999–2000. The London Development agency was established in 2000–01. The table as follows shows the RDAs grant allocation and expenditure for each of the financial years between 1999–2000 and 2002–03 and their initial allocations for 2003–04.

£ million

	1999–2000		*2000–01*	
RDA	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*
Advantage West Midlands	108	103	124	113
East of England	30	30	40	36
East Midlands	46	41	77	67
London	N/a	N/a	268	235
North West	141	141	159	156
ONE North East	92	92	101	98
South East	64	63	75	73
South West of England	43	43	63	62
Yorkshire Forward	121	121	148	125
Total	645	636	1,054	965

£ million

	2001–02		*2002–03*		*2003–04*
RDA	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*	*Allocation*	*Expenditure*	*Allocation*
Advantage West Midlands	171	141	205	204	221
East of England	63	55	89	88	85
East Midlands	97	86	102	101	118
London	289	266	296	295	291
North West	277	270	275	274	318
ONE North East	163	156	193	193	219
South East	111	97	115	112	123
South West of England	92	85	103	103	101
Yorkshire Forward	246	207	211	211	243
Total	1,508	1,363	1,589	1,581	1,719

Note:
These figures are the grant paid to Agencies and expenditure funded by grant. The Agencies total income will also include EU grants, receipts from sales of property and rental income.

DTI's own contribution to the RDAs was £2 million in 1999–2000, £17 million in 2000–01, £57 million in 2001–02, £161 million in 2002–03 and £177.7 million in 2003–04.

Sugar

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she has received proposals from the European Commission on reform of the sugar regime; and if she will make a statement. [149137]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

The European Commission published a Communication on reform of the sugar regime in September 2003 outlining three broad options for political debate in preparation for making legislative proposals later this year. The UK stakeholder consultation on these broad options closed on 16 January 2004 and the Government are currently considering the various responses received.

Work-Life Balance

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many and what percentage of working parents requesting *(a)* flexible working and *(b)* adoption leave since April 2003 were women. [150347]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There are no requirements to notify DTI people on the number of men or women who have requested flexible working or adoption leave since April 2003.

The preliminary findings of the 2003 DTI Work-Life Balance Survey of employees suggest that one in six employees (17 per cent.) had approached their employer

(in the previous two years) to make a request to change how they regularly work for a sustained period of time. These requests were most likely to be made by women, mothers, parents whose youngest child was under two-years-old and those in services and sales, and least likely by older employees (45+ years) and full-time workers.

As part of the Department's monitoring of the new laws for working parents it is collecting evidence from number of sources to build up a picture of the demand and uptake, of flexible working.

The Department has commissioned questions on the take-up of flexible working which currently appear in the Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey. The results of these will be available in spring 2004. In addition the Department is working with key intermediaries, such as Working Families and Maternity Alliance who are collating data through member/support surveys, to obtain qualitative evidence to support the quantitative research under way.

There are less than 4,000 adoptions a year and given that statutory adoption leave was introduced only in April 2003 it is far too early to make any assessment of take-up.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Council Tax

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what central guidance is issued by his Department in relation to the display by local councils of the qualifying rules for council tax disability reduction, with particular reference to occupants of Band A properties with disabilities. [150423]

Mr. Raynsford: The Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rating (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2003 requires the explanatory notes to contain a general indication as to the circumstances in which a person may be eligible for the purposes of the Council Tax (Reductions for Disabilities) Regulations 1992. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued no central guidance.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account he will take of the Budget Red Book's estimate for the rise in council tax revenues in 2004–05 in determining the level of council tax rises at which he will exercise capping powers. [150209]

Mr. Raynsford: In order to consider public expenditure in the round, the Treasury does make projections of council tax yield for future years. These projections are based on a number of assumptions about changes in the council tax rate, the tax base, the collection rate and council tax benefit payments. It would be wrong for the Treasury to make a detailed forecast of council tax rates, as these are set by local authorities, not by the Government. The rate is therefore assumed to rise in line with past trend.

This does not represent a judgment by the Government on a likely or acceptable level of council tax, and has no effect whatsoever on grant allocations to local authorities.

With the significant extra investment the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister put into local government and the scope for efficiency improvements, our view is that local authorities can and should deliver council tax increases in low single figures in 2004–05.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the review of the Local Government Pension Scheme began; when it will be concluded; and when the conclusions will be published. [151247]

Phil Hope: A programme of work to ensure the Local Government Pension scheme in England and Wales continues to provide reasonable pensions at an affordable cost to employers, members and tax payers has been under way since October 2002. Changes to the scheme's current regulatory framework are programmed to take effect in April 2004 and in April 2005, within a strategy framework announced in July 2003. Proposals to ensure the sustainability of the scheme for the longer term will be circulated later this year.

Cambridgeshire Schools Budget

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what date he was informed of the intention of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to direct Cambridgeshire County Council to increase its school budget by £4.5 million. [150834]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has regular discussions with the Department for Education and Skills, including on the possible use of the power to set a minimum schools budget for a local authority.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what powers he would implement the regionalisation of the Fire Service in Essex without the consent of Essex County Council. [149698]

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what powers he would implement the regionalisation of the Fire Service in Hereford and Worcester without the consent of Herefordshire and Worcestershire county councils. [149838]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Members for Buckingham, Taunton, North Thanet, North Wiltshire, Runnymede and Weybridge, South-East Cambridgeshire, Brentwood and Ongar, Poole and Spelthorne on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1458W.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research he has assessed that indicates that the optimum structure for the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is one based on the existing Government Office West Midlands Region. [149834]

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what research relating to Essex he has commissioned to provide the evidential basis for his plans to regionalise the Fire Service; [149701]

(2) what research he has assessed that indicates that the optimum structure for the Essex Fire and Rescue Service is one based on the existing Government Office East of England Region. [149694]

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research relating to Staffordshire he has commissioned to provide the evidential basis for his plans to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service. [149849]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Members for Buckingham, Taunton, North Thanet, North Wiltshire, Runnymede and Weybridge, South-East Cambridgeshire, Brentwood and Ongar, Poole and Spelthorne on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1453W.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what estimate he has made of the change in the number of jobs in Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service that will be consequent on the proposed regionalisation of the Fire and Rescue Service; [149836]

(2) what change in the number of managerial jobs he expects to result from the regionalisation of the Fire Service in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. [149837]

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what estimate he has made of the change in the number of jobs in Essex Fire and Rescue Service that will be consequent on the proposed regionalisation of the Fire and Rescue Service; [149696]

(2) what change in the number of managerial jobs he expects to result from the regionalisation of the Fire Service in Essex. [149697]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given to the hon. Members for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow), Taunton (Mr. Flook), North Thanet (Mr. Gale), North Wiltshire (Mr. Gray), Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr. Hammond), South-East Cambridgeshire (Mr. Paice), Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. Pickles), Poole (Mr. Syms) and Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1456W.

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Greater London Authority on his plans to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service. [149891]

Mr. Raynsford: The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority already operates on a region wide basis.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many retained firefighters were employed by the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service on 1 January. [149672]

Mr. Raynsford: Information provided by the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service shows that there were 384 retained firefighters employed by them on 15 January 2004 (including 19 volunteers).

Housing

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local housing authorities in England have published a housing strategy; and how many of the published strategies contain policies for reducing the incidence of empty homes. [150124]

Keith Hill: All local housing authorities in England have housing strategies. Information on the number which include specific policies on empty homes is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the provision of affordable housing; and what plans he has to improve its availability. [150383]

Keith Hill: The Government is acutely aware of the difficulties associated with shortages of good quality housing at an affordable price. A programme of action to address this, and to tackle poor condition housing and low demand and abandonment, was set out in "Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future", launched on 5 February 2003. The programme for affordable housing focuses on: improving the effectiveness of the planning system; the establishment of four growth areas to alleviate the overall housing pressures in London and surrounding areas; and targeted limitations on the right to buy. In addition Kate Barker, a member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, is carrying out a review of issues underlying the lack of supply and responsiveness of housing in the UK.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has increased the funding for provision of additional affordable housing through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme to around £5 billion for the three years 2003–04 to 2005–06; £1 billion of this will be spent on housing for key workers. Some £600 million is being made available over the same period to support work in the growth areas which will be used for site assembly/remediation of brownfield land and infrastructure as well as providing additional affordable housing.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for the re-development of council-owned housing estates during the next 10 years. [150385]

Keith Hill: The Sustainable Communities Plan sets out the policies, resources and partnerships necessary to transform our communities. This includes the steps we are taking to regenerate council-owned housing estates, for example, through the work of the market renewal pathfinders, our decent homes policy and through various liveability initiatives.

Key among these are:

£500 million over the next two years to secure transformation of housing markets in stock in nine areas where demand is particularly weak. All of the nine market renewal pathfinder project intervention areas contain a mixture of social and private sector housing. The pathfinder schemes are being designed in such a way as to bring major benefits both in terms of improving demand for housing and reaching decent homes target;

a commitment to ensuring that all social housing is made decent by 2010. In delivering this commitment, local authorities are encouraged to ensure the outcome is sustainable in the long term by taking a view about the future demand for their council estates. Therefore in some areas delivery may be achieved through a mixture of demolition, re-modelling and refurbishment; and

£201 million for programmes to create more liveable places and improve the local environment for communities.

In addition, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is helping to tackle multiple deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country with a focus on the five key themes of crime, health, employment, education, and housing and the physical environment. For instance, housing interventions as part of the New Deal for Communities programme include renovating houses, the development of master plans for housing, elimination of vacant and derelict housing and redevelopment projects.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average waiting time is for a person to be re-housed in Chorley for *(a)* all housing and *(b)* old age pensioner housing. [150406]

Keith Hill: The average waiting time for people to be re-housed by Chorley Borough Council is tabled as follows:

Average wait to be re-housed (days)

	All housing	*OAP*	*Statutory homeless*
2000–01	245	402	67
2001–02	244	425	43
2002–03	270	377	89
2003–04	244	331	135

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the waiting list figures are in Chorley for *(a)* all housing and *(b)* old age pensioner housing for each of the last five years. [150407]

Keith Hill: The waiting list figures for Chorley Borough Council in each the last five years are tabled as follows:

Current waiting list figures (houses)

	OAP	*Others*	*Total*	*Homeless applications*	*Total*
1999–2000	83	112	195	Unknown	195
2000–01	110	257	367	459	826
2001–02	133	507	640	508	1,148
2002–03	191	937	1,128	493	1,621
2003–04	270	1,385	1,655	434	2,089

New Build (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the amount of brownfield land available for new build in Chorley. [150016]

Keith Hill: The 2002 National Land Use Database of Previously Developed Land shows a reported 310 hectares of previously developed land potentially available for development in Chorley. This includes 188 hectares of vacant or derelict land and buildings, and 122 hectares currently in use with the potential for redevelopment.

Permitted Development Order Review

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the organisations and individuals consulted in the Permitted Development Order Review England, published in September 2003. [150999]

Keith Hill: The research study into permitted development was commissioned from consultants Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd. in 2002. A list of those organisations who were consulted by the researchers can be found in Annex 1 of the report which is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk. Copies are also available in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what additional consultation is required before progress can be made with the recommendations of the Permitted Development Order Review England, with respect to railway undertakings and telecommunications masts. [151000]

Keith Hill: The research study into permitted development was commissioned from consultants Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd. in 2002. Informal comments were invited on the recommendations contained in the report on the review of permitted development rights when it was published in September 2003. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are putting together proposals on which we will conduct a full consultation exercise later this year.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget of the information campaign, Elected Regional Assembly: Your Say, is *(a)* in total, *(b)* for the East Midlands and *(c)* for West Derbyshire. [150890]

Mr. Raynsford: 'Your Say' is intended to inform everyone in the North East, the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber who will have a chance later this year to vote in referendums on whether to establish an elected regional assemblies.

The total budget for this financial year is £500,000.

It is not intended that the other five English regions should have a referendum this year. Therefore, there is no 'Your Say' budget allocation for the East Midlands or the West Derbyshire sub-region.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

British Monarchy Studies

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much time secondary school students spent studying the British monarchy in the last period for which figures are available; [150360]

(2) what provision is made in the national curriculum for *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary education to teach school children the values and history of the British monarchy. [150388]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The history and development of the British monarchy is a key feature of the statutory programmes of study for National Curriculum History in primary and secondary schools. In addition, through the Citizenship National Curriculum which is a statutory requirement for all pupils aged 11–16, pupils will be taught about the United Kingdom and the institutions which underpin our democracy, including

the role of the Queen. There is no information collected on the time school pupils spend studying the British monarchy.

Child Poverty

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire lived in poverty in (i) 2001–02 and (ii) 2002–03. [150924]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for the City of York (Hugh Bayley) on 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 462W.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of staff employed within his Department are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145934]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for State at the Cabinet Office (Mr. Alexander) on 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1130W.

Employer Training Pilots

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list, broken down by region, the *(a)* firms and *(b)* companies taking part in Employer Training Pilots; and how much public funding each of them has received in (i) 2001–02, (ii) 2002–03 and (iii) 2003. [150008]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As the Employer Training Pilots did not commence until September 2002, no public funding was given to employers during 2001–02. Since September 2002 over 6,000 employers have signed up for the pilots. Details of funding paid to participating employers is not held centrally, but by the local Learning and Skills Councils operating the pilots, and the information cannot be collated to the level of detail requested without incurring disproportionate cost. I have, however, asked Mark Haysom, the Learning and Skills Council's Chief Executive, to write to the hon. Gentleman with details of the total amounts of public funding paid to or on behalf of participating employers under the Employer Training Pilots in each of the pilot areas, and the names of participating businesses. A copy of his reply will also be placed in the House of Commons Library.

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the success rate as defined by his Department is for Employer Training Pilots; and if he will make a statement. [150009]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Employer Training Pilots were set up in September 2002 and will run until August 2005. They are testing the effectiveness of a range of measures designed to increase employer-based training for low-skilled employees, resulting in the acquisition of basic skills or level 2 qualifications. An evaluation report on the first year of the pilots has been produced for DfES by the Institute for Employment Studies. These interim findings show that at the end of August 2003:

- there were over 3,000 employers and 14,000 learners registered as taking part, with more in the process of starting;
- more than two in five employers engaged with the ETPs have had no previous involvement with government agencies such as the Learning and Skills Councils or Business Links;
- ETP learners tend to be aged between 26 and 45, in full-time low-skilled jobs, and earn an average of £6 an hour. Over half of the learners were female;
- both employers and employees were expressing high levels of satisfaction with the programme.

At this interim stage it is too early to draw any definitive conclusions about the pilots and the second year will be used to explore a number of issues in more depth; these include the numbers achieving qualifications, which elements of the pilots are most attractive to employers and employees, and the longer term impact of the training on both businesses and individuals.

The first year evaluation report was published in December 2003 and is available on the DfES website. A copy is also being placed in the House of Commons Library.

Modern Apprenticeships

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many expressions of interest were received between the start of the advertising campaign in London in 2002 promoting modern apprenticeships and three months after the conclusion of the campaign; and how many of these expressions of interest translated into modern apprenticeship courses started. [150010]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Gentleman with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Oath of Allegiance

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make provision for school children to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen and the United Kingdom. [150386]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There are no plans to make provision for school children to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen and the United Kingdom. However, understanding about the rights and duties of citizens of the UK and the role of the Queen in our democracy are part of Citizenship education, now a statutory subject for 11 to 16-year-olds.

Pupil Exclusions

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on pupil exclusions. [146665]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government are investing in a wide-ranging programme of measures to improve standards of behaviour and to develop and encourage the use of alternatives to exclusion. But exclusion must

continue to be one of the sanctions for serious misbehaviour available to schools. And, when a head excludes for good reasons, that decision should not be overturned. We have therefore reformed the legislation governing exclusion appeal panels to strike a better balance between the interests of the individual pupil and those of the school community as a whole.

Rural Youth Grant

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the amount of rural youth grant given to each local authority in the South West since 1997. [148874]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department for Education and Skills does not make rural youth grants to local authorities.

Schoolbags

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are in place in England and Wales to protect children from back injuries sustained through carrying excessively heavy schoolbags to, in and from school; and if he will make a statement. [148812]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: My Department advises local education authorities and schools in England to provide storage facilities and to plan timetables so that pupils need not carry excessively heavy bags to, in or from school. It is for local authorities and schools to assess and manage the health and safety risks of handling heavy loads.

School Drinking Water

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what provision his Department has made to enable schoolchildren to have access to clean drinking water during the school day. [149862]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 requires all schools to have a wholesome supply of water for domestic purposes, including drinking water. Further guidance is available in Building Bulletin 87 (Guidelines for Environmental Design in Schools), which can be viewed on the website: www.teachernet.gov.uk/energy. However, it is for local education authorities, governors and schools to decide how and when drinking water should be made available to pupils.

University Attendance

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average public subsidy is for each person attending university in 2003–04. [148444]

Alan Johnson: Our latest estimate is that, on average, a student in higher education will benefit from around £5,300 in public subsidy. This estimate includes the average amount that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) pay the institution as grant for teaching, the economic costs to the Government of issuing a maintenance loan, and any fee remission and other grants.

University for Industry

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent on the University for Industry in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what proportion was spent on (i) administration and (ii) staffing. [149991]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: My Department makes grant funding available annually to Ufi which helps to fund Ufi's infrastructure and operating costs including the costs of operating the learndirect information and advice service. Ufi also receives LSC funding indirectly through the sale of learndirect courses and materials to the national network ("hubs") that Ufi has established to deliver learndirect courses.

In 2002–03, £53.800 million was spent from funding allocated to Ufi directly from my Department. Ufi also received £28 million from the sale of learndirect materials to hubs for learning subsidised with public funds. From this income £12.8 million (15.6 per cent.) was spent on staff related costs and £10.5 million (12.8 per cent.) on other administration costs. We are not able to provide the same information for 2003–04 because the financial year is not complete.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of funding provided to the University for Industry by his Department was taken up by learners in 2002–03. [149993]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In the academic year 2002/03, £139.5 million was set aside for Ufi/learndirect provision by the LSC from its "Learning Participation" budget. From this budget £116 million (83.1 per cent.) was taken up by learners. (The grant funding made available annually by my Department to Ufi does not cover learner costs. Figures are not available for the financial year 2002–03.)

The LSC is currently conducting an audit of the learning undertaken in academic year 2002/03. This audit is expected to be completed in February 2004. The figures provided here are based on interim and pre-audit data and might be subject to subsequent revision.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the Learning and Skills Council low priority adult funding budget will go to the University for Industry in each local Learning and Skills Council region in 2004–05. [149994]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: On 4 December 2003 the Secretary of State for Education and Skills wrote to the LSC setting out LSC budgets for 2004–05. In this letter £6,311.616 million was set aside for the "Learning Participation Budget". This budget (which supports the delivery of a number of Departmental priorities and is not a "low priority" budget) funds participation and achievement in learning by young people and adults and supports workforce development.

The LSC will shortly decide how much of this budget to set aside for learndirect provision in England on the basis of 2003–04 performance.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what liaison takes place between local Learning and Skills Councils and the University for Industry; and if he will make a statement. [149995]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Ufi liaises with the 47 local Learning and Skills Councils to agree targets for the engagement through learndirect of different types of priority learners. This results in contracts between the local Learning and Skills Councils and their local learndirect hubs for the delivery of learndirect provision in their area. In year performance is monitored on a regular basis and a biannual review of hubs is undertaken to optimise the contribution of learndirect to local priorities.

There are also regular strategic reviews between Ufi Regional Directors and local Learning and Skills Councils (and other key local and regional partners) to assess and optimise the contribution of learndirect to the achievement of local skills development priorities.

From August 2004, the LSC will contract nationally with Ufi. Provision will, however, continue to be planned locally and local Learning and Skills Councils will monitor performance.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Judicial Review

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how the Government intend to deal with judicial review of decisions formerly made by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal. [150179]

Mr. Lammy: The Government have introduced measures in the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill to establish a new single tier Asylum and Immigration Tribunal. This will merge the two current tiers of appeal in asylum and immigration cases. The judicial determinations and decisions made by the new tribunal will be final and can only be challenged in the higher courts on the grounds that a tribunal member has acted in bad faith.

Court Service

Ian Lucas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance his Department gives to the Court Service on political neutrality. [150442]

Mr. Leslie: The Civil Service Management Code sets out the standards of conduct and discipline that all civil servants must follow. The Code states:

> "Civil servants must not take part in any political or public activity which compromises, or might be seen to compromise, their impartial service to the Government of the day or any future Government".

That is reflected in the Department's Employee Handbook, a copy of which goes to all Court Service employees.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance his Department gives to the Court Service on appropriate use of its estate. [150443]

Mr. Leslie: Under the Government's wider market initiative courts have been encouraged to make commercial use of assets, including estates, to generate income. The Department for Constitutional Affairs has issued guidance about undertaking wider markets activities to its agencies, including the Court Service. The guidance includes specific advice about image/propriety, avoidance of disruption to core services, licensing, insurance, security and the use of in-house equipment when wider market activities are being considered. In addition separate guidance has also been produced by HM Treasury and the Court Service.

Immigration Appeal Tribunal

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the criteria are for remittal by the Immigration Appeal Tribunal; and where they are listed. [150182]

Mr. Lammy: The President of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal has not issued a Practice Direction relating to the remittal of appeals, and no set criteria are laid down, but the Tribunal will only remit an appeal where there is no practicable alternative. The decision to remit an appeal is made in accordance with the overriding objective of Rule 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Appeals (Procedure) Rules 2003: "to secure the just, timely and effective disposal of appeals and applications in the interests of the parties and in the wider public interest".

Jury Research

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made with the consultation on jury research. [150342]

Mr. Leslie: The consultation paper on jury research and investigations into juror impropriety, as announced by the Secretary of State on 11 September 2003, has been delayed so that I could take into account the decision of the Law Lords in the conjoined appeals in R *v.* Shabbir AH Mirza and R *v.* Ben Connor Ashley, Kenneth Rollock.

The Law Lords returned their decision on 22 January. After I have fully considered how this decision affects it, the consultation paper will then be published.

When the paper is published, I will ensure that the hon. Member is sent a copy.

Monarchy

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the future of the monarchy in the UK. [150122]

Mr. Leslie: The Government believe that the country should remain a constitutional monarchy in its present form.

Royal Courts of Justice

Ian Lucas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) if he will list the Court Service's dealings with Workham Marketing for the last three years; [150444]

(2) whether outside bodies are permitted to hold fundraising meetings in the Royal Courts of Justice; [150445]

(3) Affairs whether outside bodies are permitted to hold sporting events in the Royal Courts of Justice; [150446]

(4) whether outside bodies are permitted to hold political meetings in the Royal Courts of Justice; [150447]

(5) under what circumstances the Court Service hires the Royal Courts of Justice to outside bodies. [150448]

Mr. Leslie: The Royal Courts of Justice, through the Wider Markets Initiative, have been hiring out their facilities over the last two years for a range of functions. A booking was taken for a boxing charity fund-raiser through the company Workham Marketing. Unfortunately the normal procedures for bookings were not followed in this case. When a senior official examined the detail of the booking it was found that Workham Marketing were representing the Countryside Alliance, a non-charitable campaigning organisation. Since finding this out the booking has been cancelled and all necessary refunds have been made. The only other dealings that the Royal Courts of Justice have had with Workham Marketing are enquiries about the availability of other dates. In operating the Wider Markets Initiative the Court Service is concerned to maintain the independence and neutrality of the courts.

HEALTH

"Making Amends"

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he plans to publish responses to the consultation document, Making Amends; and when policy proposals will be published. [149917]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* Over 170 responses to the consultation document, Making Amends have been received and we have written to respondents to request permission to publish their comments. We are now in the process of converting comments from those respondents to electronic documents and they will be available on the Department of Health website shortly. A copy will also be placed in the Library in due course.

Responses to consultation are being assessed and analysed to assist with informing final policy details. The Government's proposals to reform and improve the way the national health service responds to clinical negligence will be announced later this year.

BSE

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment the Food Standards Agency has made of the arrangements in the USA for *(a)* testing slaughtered cattle for BSE, *(b)* surveillance and tracking of BSE in the food chain and *(c)* controlling the use of rendered by-products; and if he will make a statement. [146345]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Andrew Lansley) today.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with the United States Administration since 22 December 2003 concerning the integrity of the food chain in the US and non-contamination of it by BSE-infected meat. [146717]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Standards Agency advises that the risk to public health in the United Kingdom from BSE in third countries, including the United States, is minimised through the application of existing European Union rules. These require any such country exporting meat or live animals into the Community to have in place controls equivalent to those in the EU.

Imports of beef and beef products are permitted only if EU rules requiring the removal of specified risk material are met and veterinary certification of this is provided.

In recent years the UK has imported little beef from the US. This is because of unrelated controls designed to prevent exports from cattle that have been given growth-promoting hormones banned in the EU. Data from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs show that, since 2000, the UK has imported only around 80 tonnes of fresh or chilled bovine meat and around 1,800 tonnes of meat and offal preparations. In addition, since 1996 all meat and bone meal (MBM), a by-product of the rendering process, has been banned from use in feeding stuffs for all farmed livestock. It has also been banned as a fertiliser, except where used on non-agricultural land. Any MBM originating from the US could therefore not be used in the UK for this purpose.

The Food Standards Agency notes the recent introduction of a number of additional public protection safeguards against BSE by the United States Department of Agriculture. The EU is in active discussion with the US authorities about what is being done and I understand will shortly be arranging a technical visit to the US to evaluate the position.

I have not held any discussions with the US authorities over this issue.

Building Maintenance

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the NHS budget for the current financial year has been allocated to the maintenance of buildings. [150362]

Mr. Hutton: Most significant maintenance that improves the condition of national health service buildings is capital-funded.

The allocation of capital resources to the NHS for the three-year period, 2003–04 to 2005–06, was announced on 8 January 2003. None of the resources allocated were identified specifically for the maintenance of buildings.

Operational capital is allocated directly to NHS trusts and primary care trusts (PCTs) and is used primarily for maintaining their asset bases and funding other minor investments. For 2003–04, £844 million has been allocated as operational capital, or 29 per cent, of the total public capital budget. It is, however, for local NHS

trusts and PCTs to decide how much of this is used to fund building maintenance and how much is allocated to other local priorities.

By funding the replacement of major assets, the strategic health authorities' strategic capital programmes, totalling £684 million in 2003–04 and private finance initiative programme also make a contribution to meeting the NHS's maintenance requirement.

Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action the Government are taking on the prevention of cancer; and what targets have been set for cancer prevention. [150234]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The Government funds an extensive health improvement and prevention programme aimed at preventing cancer and coronary heart disease, which are the two main causes of mortality. This includes work on tobacco control and smoking cessation, improving nutrition and diet and increasing levels of physical activity, all of which have an effect on cancer prevention.

Health improvement and prevention work is also undertaken directly by primary care trusts (PCTs). Since April 2003, 75 per cent., of the national health service budget has been devolved directly to PCTs, allowing them to control the resources to deliver on both national and local priorities, including cancer.

All the targets we have established for cancer, including those for treatment and reducing smoking rates, will contribute towards prevention.

Cannabis

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has undertaken into links between taking cannabis and schizophrenia. [149821]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department commissioned the following research projects as part of the Drug Misuse Policy Research Initiative, which funded £2.4 million research between 2000 and 2003.

Long term heavy cannabis use: patterns and problems. Mr. Niall Coggans, Strathclyde Institute for Biomedical Sciences

A national epidemiological study of dually diagnosed substance misuse and psychiatric disorders between 1993–1998, using the General Practice Research Database. Dr. Martin Frischer, Keele University.

Co-morbidity in the National Psychiatric Morbidity Surveys. Dr. Michael Farrell, Dr. Colin Taylor, Institute of Psychiatry.

Co-morbidity of substance misuse and mental health problems: a study of the prevalence and patterns of co-morbidity and the need for services amongst treatment populations. Mr. Tim Weaver, Imperial College School of Medicine.

Dual Diagnosis in a Primary Care Group (PCG), (100,000 population locality): a step by step epidemiological needs assessment and design of a training and service response model. Dr. Geraldine Strathdee, Oxleas National Health Service Trust.

The Department also monitors research in this area and has a range of expert advisers to inform policy.

Colonoscopies

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of colonoscopies were unsuccessful in each of the last five years. [151254]

Mr. Hutton: Information about the proportion of unsuccessful colonoscopies is not held centrally.

Coronary Disease

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what clinical audit data hospitals and primary care trusts in England have collated that is more than 12 months old covering the information in Milestone 3 on heart failure set out in the National Service Framework on Coronary Heart Disease. [149855]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This data is not held centrally, as the delivery of the national service framework (NSF) is managed locally. The Department's assessment is that the national health service has made good progress on this issue, as seen in the decline in emergency admissions for heart failure. As the new general medical services contract takes effect and heart failure assumes a higher priority in the central phase of delivery of the NSF, we expect to see further rapid progress on this important group of patients. To support the publication of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence's clinical guidelines that set out recommendations for NHS care of people with chronic heart failure, the Department has published a booklet, "Developing services for heart failure".

Dentistry

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists' surgeries there are in Brent East constituency. [149904]

Mr. Hutton: Figures collected by the Department are by primary care trust (PCT) and not by constituency.

Brent PCT has 64 dental practices (latest data available as at January 2004).

These figures can be routinely obtained from the NHS UK web-site at www.nhs.uk.

Dermatology

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to increase the number of general practitioners and nurses who undertake training in dermatology. [151252]

Mr. Hutton: The relevant statutory bodies are responsible for setting curricula for health professional training. We do share a commitment with those bodies that all health professionals are trained so that they have the skills and knowledge to deliver a high quality health service to all groups of the population with whom they deal. National health service trusts, primary care trusts and workforce development confederations are responsible for commissioning the training and development across their local health economies that their professionals need.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* general practitioners and *(b)* nurses have been trained in dermatology in each of the last five years; and what percentage of the total numbers of each this represents. [151253]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not collected centrally.

Erythropoietic Treatments

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many recorded incidences of pure red cell aplasia there were in England and Wales between 1999 and 2002 following treatment using erythropoietic products; [149173]

(2) if he will list the incidences of pure red cell aplasia occurring after treatment with *(a)* Epogen, *(b)* Aranesp, *(c)* Neorecormon and *(d)* Eprex since 1999; [149174]

(3) how many fatalities have been linked to the use of erythropoietic treatments for anaemia; [149175]

(4) if he will commission studies into the incidence of pure red cell aplasia after erythropoietic treatments for anaemia; and what studies he has assessed into the potentially adverse effects of erythropoietic treatments for anaemia. [149176]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) receive reports of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) submitted by doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists and coroners via the Yellow Card Scheme, and there is a legal requirement for companies to report suspected ADRs to their products.

The table shows the number of suspected ADR reports of red cell aplasia received annually by the MHRA/CSM between 1999 and 2003. These numbers do not necessarily represent all cases that may have occurred, because there is an unquantifiable degree of under-reporting associated with the Yellow Card Scheme, as with all voluntary reporting schemes. Figures are presented for epoetin alfa (Eprex), and epoetin beta (Neorecormon). The MHRA/CSM has received no ADR reports involving red cell aplasia in association with either Aranesp or Epogen during this interval. The product known as Epogen was not marketed in the United Kingdom during the interval in question.

Number of case reports of red cell aplasia received

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Epoetin alfa (Eprex) United Kingdom	4	4	9	21	6
England and Wales only	4	3	8	19	6
Epoetin beta (Neorecormon) United Kingdom	4	2	0	7	1
England and Wales only	4	1	0	7	1

The total number of suspected ADR reports received from UK sources between the start of 1999 and the end of 2003 in association with epoetin alfa was 44; the number associated with epoetin beta was 14. Both epoetin alfa and epoetin beta were implicated in 10 reports; therefore the total number of reports of red cell aplasia received in association with all epoetins was 48.

The cause of death was recorded as red cell aplasia in one case. This patient showed evidence of parvovirus B19 infection, which is a well-established cause of red cell aplasia. Therefore, there are reasonable grounds to doubt a causal association between the epoetin administered and the red cell aplasia that occurred in this case.

Two large studies are currently under way to investigate the apparent association between epoetins and red cell aplasia, including the incidence of red cell aplasia in patients treated with epoetins.

The epoetins available in the UK were authorised on the basis of data, including clinical trial data, that have demonstrated evidence of safety and efficacy in all licensed indications. All studies were assessed for evidence of potential unwanted effects that might be attributable to treatment. The number of patients exposed to treatment prior to grant of a Marketing Authorisation would not normally be large enough to permit the detection of very rare unwanted effects, which would usually only come to light as a result of post-marketing surveillance following the exposure of much larger numbers of patients, as was the case with red cell aplasia in association with epoetins.

EU Health Insurance Cards

Ms Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 187W, on EU health insurance cards, what the timescale for the scoping study is. [147557]

Mr. Hutton: Ministers will shortly conclude their consideration of the options available for implementing the European health insurance cards for United Kingdom residents. We will then consult interested parties.

Fruit for Schools Scheme

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what evaluation he has undertaken of the effect of the Fruit for Schools pilot schemes on children's health; [149852]

(2) what central Government funds have been allocated in each of the next three years for the Fruit for Schools scheme; and if he will make a statement. [149859]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables helps to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, like heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

The National School Fruit Scheme is at present available to schools in London, the East and West Midlands and the North West. 96 per cent. of schools invited have joined the scheme, and an estimated 95 per cent. of children eat the fruit.

Following positive results from the region-wide pilots, supported by £42 million from the New Opportunities Fund, the scheme is to be offered to all local education authority schools with children aged four to six by the end of 2004. The Department will provide £77 million over the next two years (£33.5 million has been allocated for 2004–05 and £43.5 million for 2005–06).

In a preliminary survey, more than a quarter of children and their families reported eating more fruit at home since their children were in the scheme. A large-scale evaluation, with the support of the New Opportunities Fund, is underway. This involves 6,000 children across 100 schools, using a specially developed assessment tool to measure the impact of the scheme on children's diet both at school and home. Data will be collected before and after the scheme starts in the North East in March and again in the autumn 2004 and a report is expected in 2005.

General Practitioners

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will review Schedule 1, Part 1, paragraph 9 of the NHS (General Medical and Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1994 to assess whether the terms of service for doctors need to be revised to give patients better safeguards over having their names removed from general practitioners' lists; and if he will make a statement. [148153]

Mr. Hutton: We have already considered this in developing the new general medical services contract. This includes strengthened provisions requiring a practice to have reasonable grounds for removal and to advise the patient and primary care trust of that reason. Patients will be given warnings before such action is taken by a practice.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner surgeries there are in Brent East constituency. [149902]

Mr. Hutton: Figures collected by the Department are by primary care trust (PCT) and not by constituency.

Brent PCT has 78 general practitioner surgeries as at January 2004.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner surgeries in Brent East constituency closed their list in the last 12 months. [149903]

Mr. Hutton: We do not routinely collect information on the number of closed lists.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients, in the absence of an available general practitioner, have been allocated to a locum doctor in *(a)* Brent, *(b)* London and *(c)* England. [149961]

Mr. Hutton: A patient who experiences difficulty in registering to receive primary medical services may be allocated by the primary care trust to the list of a local general practitioner principal or personal medical services provider. Locum doctors, however, do not hold patient lists and patients may not be allocated to such a doctor.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of running a general practitioner surgery was in the last year for which figures are available. [150366]

Mr. Hutton: The average costs incurred by general practitioners in running their practices, based on the latest Inland Revenue Enquiry data for 2001–02, was £106,272.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the *(a)* number and *(b)* rate of general practitioner vacancies in each (i) strategic health authority and (ii) primary care trust in each year since each was established. [149864]

Mr. Hutton: The Department's annual general practitioner (GP) Recruitment and Retention Vacancy survey started in 2000.

The estimated three month GP vacancy rate for England in 2003 was 3.4 per cent. and 2.7 per cent. in 2002. It is not possible to produce reliable estimates of the vacancy rate at strategic health authority (SHA) level or primary care trust (PCT) level. Estimated three month vacancy rates are not available before 2002.

Information on the number of GP vacancies for each SHA since 2000 and on the number of GP vacancies in each PCT for 2003, the first year data was collected at PCT level has been placed in the Library. This is a count of all GP vacancies that have occurred during each year. It will include existing posts that doctors have left and also new posts created to increase the workforce, even where they were filled very quickly. Thus, the increase in vacancies in part is a result of there being more posts overall, reflecting the Government's plan to increase the GP workforce.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner surgeries in Romford receive NHS funding. [150373]

Mr. Hutton: There are a total of 17 national health service general practitioner surgeries in Romford and all receive NHS funding.

Haemoglobinopathies

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the Government plans to increase awareness of sickle cell and thalassaemia. [147894]

Miss Melanie Johnson: NHS Plan set out a commitment to introduce, by 2004, new and effective screening programmes for women and children, including a new national linked antenatal and neonatal programme for sickle cell and thalassaemia. The sickle cell and thalassaemia screening programme has held a series of workshops throughout the country, with the aim of increasing awareness of the objectives and principles of the programme among general practitioners, practice nurses, midwives, health visitors, laboratory and administrative staff. To support the national rollout of the newborn sickle cell screening, the programme is planning various activities to develop a mass media campaign to improve the visibility of these disorders in communities with the highest prevalence.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the Government plans to increase community support networks and facilities for sickle cell and thalassaemia sufferers and their families. [147895]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Local implementation of the national health service sickle cell and thalassaemia screening programme in England is being supported by a UK National Screening Committee development programme. The programme is being developed in partnership with the key community and voluntary sector stakeholders. A key element of the national work is a community consultation and engagement project to ensure community awareness and acceptance of the screening programme. The screening programme works closely with voluntary groups to ensure that they are well informed about developments.

The Department is working with professional organisations to consider proposals for clinical networks of services to be developed, allowing patients to be cared for locally.

Havering

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money has been allocated to NHS services in the London borough of Havering for financial year 2004–05. [150361]

Mr. Hutton: Funding is allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. Revenue allocations for PCTs covering the period 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced on 11 December 2002.

For 2004–05, the revenue allocation for Havering PCT is £234.9 million. Havering PCT is co-terminus with the London borough of Havering.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the quality of buildings in which NHS treatment is provided in the London borough of Havering. [150364]

Mr. Hutton: The new acute hospital at Oldchurch Park in central Romford, costing £200 million, is already under way and is scheduled for completion in late 2006. This will replace the acute facilities at Oldchurch and Harold Wood Hospitals, part of Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals National Health Service Trust, in purpose-built accommodation and will improve dramatically the quality of buildings available for acute care in Havering.

From May 2003, Havering primary care trust (PCT), together with neighbouring Barking and Dagenham PCT, local councils and the North-East London Mental Health Trust (NELMHT) have been working in partnership with Primaria to improve local health services and the buildings that house them. This partnership provides a new way of funding the development of modern, efficient community-based services and the buildings that they are in and follows the NHS local investment finance trust (LIFT) initiative. Five health care premises in Havering will be developed initially. The PCT is currently identifying further developments to be undertaken in Havering through LIFT. Havering, Barking and Dagenham PCTs and NELMHT have developed a strategic outline case (SOC), which was approved by the North-East London Strategic Health Authority in September 2003. The SOC establishes the case for investment, and considers options for the reprovision of facilities for all existing services provided at St. George's hospital, Hornchurch, and the Harold Wood and Hornchurch local health clinics.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of NHS spending in the London borough of Havering was spent on the *(a)* diagnosis and *(b)* treatment of sexually transmitted diseases in the last period for which figures are available. [150365]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money the Havering NHS Trust was given in the financial year 2003–04. [150375]

Mr. Hutton: The data concerning the financial allocation to Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals National Health Service Trust is not collected centrally; NHS trusts receive their funding from contractual relationships with primary care trusts (PCTs).

The allocation of funding to Havering PCT for 2003–04 was £214.0 million, a 7.2 per cent. increase in real terms and a 9.6 per cent. increase in cash terms.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average cost of performing a cataract operation in the NHS was in the London Borough of Havering in 2003; and what the cost was in *(a)* Barking and *(b)* Brentwood; [150435]

(2) how many cataract operations were performed in the London borough of Havering in 2003. [150434]

Mr. Hutton: The data regarding the average cost of performing a cataract operation and the number of cataract operations performed, are not collected by London borough but by national health service trust.

The latest information available is for the financial year 2001–02. In 2001–02, the average cost of performing a cataract operation at Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust was £689.

In 2001–02, Barking, Havering and Redbridge hospitals carried out a total of 779 cataract extractions with lens implants as day cases.

Health Service Recovery Plans

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which *(a)* NHS, *(b)* NHS mental health and *(c)* primary care trusts have financial recovery plans; what period the recovery plans cover; and what the level of (i) recurring and (ii) non-recurring deficit or overspend the plans are intended to recover. [151470]

Mr. Hutton: The information is not collected centrally for individual organisations. This is the responsibility of the managing strategic health authority.

Hepatitis C

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* haemophiliacs and *(b)* non-haemophiliacs will be eligible for compensation under the hepatitis C ex-gratia payment scheme; and when he expects to announce the details of the scheme. [151351]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement made to the House on 26 **January 2004,** *Official Report*, column 1WS, by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health, announcing the details of the scheme which will be open to both haemophiliacs and non-haemophiliacs.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of rape victims are known consequently to have contracted *(a)* a sexually transmitted disease, *(b)* HIV/AIDS, *(c)* hepatitis B and *(d)* hepatitis C in each of the last five years. [149906]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Routine surveillance for sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B and C, conducted by the Health Protection Agency, collects information on routes of transmission of these infections (for example, whether through homosexual or heterosexual sex), but does not record whether or not sex was consensual.

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* St. Helens and *(b)* Merseyside had HIV/AIDS in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2003 and (iv) the most recent in 2004 for which figures are available. [149910]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The table shows the number of HIV-infected people resident in St. Helen's and Knowsley and Merseyside local authorities who attended national health service services for HIV-related treatment and care in the last five years for which data are available.

	Residence	
Survey year	*St. Helens and Knowsley local authority*	*Merseyside local authority*[1]
1998	23	163
1999	24	180
2000	27	208
2001	27	220
2002	37	293

[1] Merseyside LAs include Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Knowsley and Wirral.

Source:

North West HIV/AIDS Monitoring Unit, Liverpool John Moores University.

Hospital-acquired Infection

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to combat the spread of MRSA within nursing and residential homes. [147605]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We consider that implementation of our recent report, "Winning Ways—Working together to reduce Healthcare Associated Infection in England[1]", will reduce infections in both hospital and community settings. This report will raise standards by reinforcing the need to follow existing good practice [2].

[1] Available at www.doh.gov.uk/cmo/hai/winningways/pdf.

[2] The Public Health Medicine Environmental Group Guidelines on the Control of Infection in Residential and Nursing homes 1996—National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Infection control: prevention of health care associated infection in primary and community care 2003.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the additional cost to the NHS of hospital acquired infections in each of the last six years; and what methodology he used to calculate that figure. [144148]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Precise data are not available. A commonly used estimate[1] is that hospital acquired infection may cost the national health service £1 billion a year.

[1] R. Plowman, N. Graves, M. Griffin, J.A. Roberts, A.V. Swan, B. Cookson, L. Taylor. The socio-economic burden of hospital acquired infection. Public Health Laboratory Service 1999

Hospitals (Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the implementation of the Darzi Review recommendations on health care in County Durham. [144868]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The proposals arising from the Darzi Review were referred to Ministers by the former South Durham and Weardale Community Health Council. These were subsequently approved for implementation in September 2002. To support the new model, the two trusts responsible for the management of the hospitals in Co. Durham and Darlington merged to form the County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals National Health Service Trust, with effect from 1 October 2002.

County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority is overseeing the process of implementation of the proposals, which cover a wide range of services. The chief executive of the SHA wrote recently to all local right hon. and hon. Members informing them of progress on the review and a copy of his letter has been placed in the Library.

Local Government

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the extent to which the recommendations in Circular HSC2001/016:LAC(2001)23 have been met by local authorities; and if he will make a statement. [150098]

Dr. Ladyman: We issued the implementation guidance Circular HSC 2001/016: LAC (2001)23 in August 2001. The guidance followed the publication, in March 2001, of the White Paper, 'Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century' (Cm 5086). 'Valuing People' set out our proposals for improving services for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers said that it would take a minimum of five years to make the changes it described.

Our first annual report to Parliament on learning disability, 'Making Change Happen' (HC 514), published in April 2003, gave a comprehensive report about the progress made on implementing all of the objectives in the White Paper. A copy of the report is available in the Library and was sent to all English right hon. and hon. Members. The report shows that we have made good progress since 'Valuing People' was published, but that there is much more to do to achieve all its aims. Further progress will be reported in our second annual report in April.

The Learning Disability Task Force monitors the progress of 'Valuing People' and reports to the Government on this. Its first report, 'Making Things Happen' was published in January 2003 and a second report is due in February.

Lung Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action the Government are taking to introduce better techniques for diagnosing lung cancer. [151255]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department of Health published "Improving Outcomes Guidance on Lung Cancer" in 1998. This guidance provides advice on how lung cancer services in the national health service should be organised to improve outcomes for lung cancer patients. It addresses the diagnosis and staging of lung cancer and recommends that a full range of diagnostic tests should be available within cancer services.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence is also preparing clinical guidelines (advice on assessment and treatment of a condition) for the NHS on the diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer. The guideline will provide guidance on diagnosis including early diagnosis; key symptoms and signs upon which a patient should be referred; factors encouraging patients to present to healthcare services sooner; diagnostic methods; staging and the impact of lung cancer on a patient's activities, as well as the need to be referred to other health professionals if required. The guideline is expected to be published in November 2004.

In addition, in March 2000, Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer were published by the Department, and sent to all general practitioners in order to help them identify those patients who are most likely to have cancer, so that they can be referred urgently to a specialist. These guidelines include a chapter on lung cancer. NICE is in the process of updating these guidelines and the update is due to be published in February 2005.

The Department are aware of the potential benefits positron emission tomography (PET) scanning can offer patients with lung cancer, particularly in assessing the stage of the disease. We will be consulting with doctors, voluntary organisations and other stakeholders on a national framework which will set out which tumour groups would benefit from PET scanning, likely future demand, and the implications for the optimal configuration and location of PET scanners for both clinical and research needs.

The work of the Modernisation Agency's Cancer Services Collaborative 'Improvement Partnership' (CSC'IP') is central to the drive to improve the detection, diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer. A specific goal of the CSC'IP' is to promote early diagnosis of lung cancer.

Mental Health

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people assessed as being elderly mentally infirm. [149792]

Dr. Ladyman: Data is not collected on the basis of elderly mentally infirm.

The research quoted in the older people's national service framework estimates that approximately 600,000 people in the United Kingdom have dementia. It is estimated that about five per cent. of people over 65 have dementia, rising to about 20 per cent. in the population over 80. It is also estimated that at any point in time about 10 to 15 per cent. of the population over 65 will have depression.

Although the main mental health problems among older people are dementia and depression, there is also a considerable number of older people with other mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia.

Negative Extrathoracic Pressure

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1069–70W, on North Staffordshire Hospital NHS Trust, when he expects to receive the results of the audit of the use of negative extrathoracic pressure at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust. [150593]

Dr. Ladyman: The independent follow-up study of continuous negative extrathoracic pressure patients at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire National Health Service Trust is being carried out independently by a research team based at Queens Medical Centre Nottingham University Hospital NHS Trust. This study is expected to be completed by the end of August 2004, but the results will need to be collated before publication.

NHS Bank

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was borrowed from the NHS Bank by each strategic health authority in the past 12 months; how much was repaid to the NHS Bank by each strategic health authority in the last 12 months; and how much the NHS Bank forecasts it will lend to each strategic health authority in the next 12 months. [150461]

Mr. Hutton: In 2003–04, the NHS Bank made available £152 million special assistance to the following strategic health authorities. Surrey and Sussex (£40 million), Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (£70 million), Thames Valley (£25 million), and Kent and Medway (£17 million).

No money was repaid to the NHS Bank by the SHAs in the last 12 months.

Decisions on special assistance for 2004–05 have not been made.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the relationship is between the NHS Bank and the NHS Financing Facility. [147032]

Mr. Hutton: NHS Bank and the NHS Foundation Trust Financing Facility carry out two separate functions. NHS Bank provides a service, via strategic health authorities, to National Health Service trusts. The purpose of the NHS Bank is to support NHS organisations in maximising the use of resources across the NHS and across years. The NHS Financing Facility provides a service to NHS foundation trusts. The Financing Facility will assess and agree capital loan applications from NHS foundation trusts on behalf of the Secretary of State.

NHS Finance

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what money has been allocated to NHS local investment finance trust schemes in each year since the scheme was introduced in *(a)* Brent, *(b)* London and *(c)* England; [149959]

(2) what uptake there has been of NHS local investment finance trust scheme funding in each year since the scheme was introduced in *(a)* Brent, *(b)* London and *(c)* England. [149960]

Mr. Hutton: The table shows the total of allocations made to primary care trusts to help develop local investment finance trust (LIFT) schemes in the Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon LIFT area, London and England since NHS LIFT was first announced.

£000

	Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon	*London*	*England*
2000–01	0	0	1,460
2001–02	0	390	800
2002–03	60	10,765	30,127
2003–04	4,600	25,394	105,860
Total	4,660	36,549	138,247

Performance Indicators

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out performance indicators and targets set by his Department in each year since May 1997 that concern public health, listing *(a)* when they were first set, *(b)* interim milestones or goals, *(c)* substantive revisions to the content and *(d)* those that were abandoned, with reasons why they were dropped. [145083]

Miss Melanie Johnson: All of the targets in the Department of Health Public Service Agreements for 1998, 2000 and 2002, including those related to public health, are listed in Chapter 5 of the 2003 Departmental Report, a copy of which is available in the Library.

The Department of Health Priorities and Planning Framework Targets (formerly called National Priorities Guidance), relating to the periods 1999–2000 to 2001–02 through to 2003–06, have all been published and are available in the Library. Many of these relate to public health.

National Health Service Performance Indicator sets have been published for each year since 1999, initially by the Department and latterly the Commission for Health Improvement. Many of these relate to public health and all are available on the Department of Health's website.

Public Bodies

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many public bodies were operating in the health service in 1997; how many are operating; what plans he has to review their number and purpose; and if he will make a statement. [150212]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is shown in the table.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced to the Health Select Committee on 30 October 2003, his intention to review the Department's executive non-departmental public bodies, special health authorities and executive agencies. We want to ensure that the roles of these bodies are in line with current expectations and that the oversight of front-line health and social services is kept to an acceptable minimum. We expect that the review will reach its conclusions by the middle of this year. National health service trusts, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and advisory and tribunal non-departmental public bodies will not be part of the review. Executive agencies, of which the Department has four, will be included.

	1 June 1997	*1 January 2004*
Executive NDPBs[1]	7	8
Advisory NDPBs	42	37
Tribunal NDPBs	3	3
Health authorities[2]	100	n/a
NHS trusts	402	275
Special health authorities	13	22
Strategic health authorities[2]	n/a	28
PCTs[3]	n/a	304
Other NHS bodies	2	0
Total	569	677

[1] NDPBs = non-departmental public bodies
[2] Health authorities were replaced by strategic health authorities from April 2002
[3] PCTs (Primary Care Trusts) were introduced from April 2000, most on 1 April 2002, and cover smaller populations than did health authorities.

Public Health

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in the performance management of the public health function; and if he will make a statement. [148609]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health and Social Care Act 2003 imposes a duty on the national health service to put and keep in place arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of health care including the promotion and protection of public health. Strategic health authorities have the role of performance managing primary care trusts (PCTs) and NHS hospital trusts, including their public health responsibilities.

The targets in the Priorities and Planning Framework, 2003–06, published in October 2002, and the performance indicators for PCTs (for example, those for 2003–04, published by the Commission for

Health Improvement in December 2003), include several related to public health. 2003–04 will be the second year for PCT ratings and this represents real progress in the performance management of public health. The Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection will take over responsibility for the ratings process from April 2004.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements have been made to collect and analyse the annual reports of directors of public health; and what guidance he has given to ensure comparability between reports. [144792]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Strategic health authorities are responsible for agreeing local national health service plans informed by these reports. In 2002 the Department of Health commissioned guidance for directors of public health on the production of their Annual Reports, which was published in 2003 by the Faculty of Public Health. We are in discussion with SHAs about ways of assessing the impact of these reports, in their performance management role.

Raloxifene

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from *(a)* patients suffering from osteoporosis and *(b)* groups representing them about the recent National Institute for Clinical Excellence assessment of Raloxifene; and how many patients have been prescribed the drug in each of the past three years. [150038]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has had no formal representations from patient groups on the subject, but has received a number of letters.

Information on the number of people who receive medicines, or reasons why a drug was prescribed is not available. Information on how many prescription items of Raloxifene Hydrochloride were dispensed is shown in the table.

Number of prescription items of Raloxifene Hydrochloride that were dispensed in the community in England from 2000.

	Number of prescription items
2000	79,944
2001	118,950
2002	160,716
2003[1]	138,841

[1] January to September

Source:
Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) data from the Prescription Pricing Authority.

Refusal of GP Referrals (Avon)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the categories of treatment for which health trusts in the Avon area are refusing to accept referrals from general practitioners; what estimate he has made of the number of patients who have been refused in each case; and if he will make a statement. [149171]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The information requested is not held centrally. It is for primary care trusts to ensure that suitable commissioning arrangements are in place. HSC 2002/007 (Securing Service Delivery: Commissioning Freedoms of Primary Care Trusts) and HSC 1998/198 (Commissioning in the new NHS) provide further information.

Residential Care

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people in poor health in England have been located in residential care in each of the last six years; [148924]

(2) what the *(a)* total and *(b)* average amount contributed by people in poor health in England located in residential care was in the last period for which figures are available. [148926]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is not held centrally in the form requested. The 2001 census included questions on where people lived and whether they considered themselves to be living with a limiting long-term illness. According to the census, there were 324,192 non-staff residents in care homes, of which 303,908 said they had a limiting long-term illness.

Information is not available on the total and average amount contributed by people with poor health. Figures are only available showing the absolute levels of sales, fees and charges recorded by local authorities as income against nursing and residential care. The latest available figures are shown in the table.

Adults under 65 and older people 2001–02

£000

Residential care	*Sales fees and charges*
Nursing home placements	532,642
Residential care home placements	1,286,515

Salt Intake

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to limit the public's regular intake of salt. [148833]

Miss Melanie Johnson: As 75 per cent. to 80 per cent. of salt comes from processed foods, the Department has called on industry to take concerted action in reducing the salt content of processed foods. The Department, in partnership with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), held a salt stakeholders meeting to highlight the role of all sectors, including industry, health and consumer bodies, on 10 November 2003. I have asked the industry to provide plans of action for reducing the salt content of foods by 27 February.

The Department and the FSA have jointly written to all public procurement bodies to help in achieving the reductions in salt intake as recommended by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition by focussing on the salt content of processed foods as part of their procurement processes.

The FSA has set salt targets—to reduce average salt intake by 10 per cent., by 2005–06 and in the long term, to reduce the average population intake by a third over the next five years—bringing intakes down to the recommended six grams per day.

The Department and the FSA communicate the importance of reducing salt in the diet to the public and health professionals through various channels, including leaflets, websites and through NHS-Direct.

Sensory Impairment

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reason sensory impairment does not feature on the list of priorities for research published on his Department's website; [149704]

(2) for what reason none of the research and development work on assistive technology listed in his Department's statutory report that was laid before Parliament in November 2003 related to sensory impairment. [149726]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* The report, published in November 2003, outlines a selection of the research and development activity relating to assistive technology funded by the Government in 2002. Full details of all the work funded are available on the Foundation for Assistive Technology website at www.fastuk.org. The website contains details of some twenty Government-funded projects related to sensory impairment that are current or were completed in 2003.

The report for 2001 contains sections on navigational aids for people with visual impairments and technologies to assist deaf and hearing-impaired people. Projects relating to sensory impairment will also be highlighted in the report for 2003. This will be laid before Parliament by July 2004.

The Department's website lists major strategic research developments in key Departmental priority areas, including cancer, mental health and coronary heart disease. In the national health service, research priorities are identified through widespread consultation with those using, delivering and managing services. They take account of the burden of disease, potential benefits and departmental objectives as well as the responsibilities and work of other funders—including the charities. Current projects relating to sensory impairment include a £0.3 million study of the acceptability, benefit and costs of early screening for hearing disability, and a £0.8 million study of interventions for mild to moderate permanent childhood hearing impairments identified by neonatal hearing screening.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes there have been to the rate of sexually transmitted diseases in the Southport and north Sefton area in the last five years. [148488]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The rate of diagnoses of the five principal sexually transmitted infections—infectious syphilis, uncomplicated gonorrhoea, uncomplicated chlamydia, genital herpes-first attack, and genital warts-first attack—by sex and age group from genito-urinary medicine clinics in the North West of England over the last five years (from 1998–2002) are shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Rates of diagnoses of infectious syphilis (primary and secondary) by sex and age group, GUM clinics, North West England, 1998–2002

			Rates (per 100,000 population)						
	Sex	Region	13–15	16–19	20–24	25–34	35–44	45+	Total
1998	M	North West	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.2
1999	M	North West	0.0	0.6	3.8	2.7	1.3	0.1	0.9
2000	M	North West	0.0	0.0	3.7	6.5	4.6	0.5	2.0
2001	M	North West	0.0	2.9	18.8	12.0	10.0	1.8	5.3
2002	M	North West	0.0	5.2	16.7	17.9	11.7	2.2	6.3
1998	F	North West	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.6	0.4	0.1	0.2
1999	F	North West	0.0	1.2	2.1	1.2	0.0	0.1	0.4
2000	F	North West	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.2
2001	F	North West	0.0	0.6	2.5	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.3
2002	F	North West	0.7	1.2	1.0	1.5	0.2	0.1	0.4

Table 2: Rates of diagnoses of uncomplicated gonococcal infection by sex and age group, GUM clinics, North West England, 1998–2002

			Rates (per 100,000 population)						
	Sex	Region	13–15	16–19	20–24	25–34	35–44	45+	Total
1998	M	North West	7	73	153	222	28	4	31
1999	M	North West	6	107	201	99	45	8	43
2000	M	North West	5	167	285	140	57	10	58
2001	M	North West	4	145	292	148	74	11	61
2002	M	North West	9	171	309	147	64	11	62
1998	F	North West	9	95	73	50	4	0	12
1999	F	North West	19	143	93	26	8	1	18
2000	F	North West	14	166	111	29	10	1	21
2001	F	North West	18	156	122	32	13	0	22
2002	F	North West	27	175	112	32	10	1	22

Table 3: Rates of diagnoses of uncomplicated genital chlamydial infection by sex and age group, GUM clinics, North West England, 1998–2002

			Rates (per 100,000 population)						
	Sex	Region	13–15	16–19	20–24	25–34	35–44	45+	Total
1998	M	North West	7	179	425	534	56	5	73
1999	M	North West	14	248	597	239	73	7	98
2000	M	North West	6	319	731	293	80	8	115
2001	M	North West	10	339	809	299	84	9	123
2002	M	North West	9	460	994	348	99	11	152
1998	F	North West	49	693	621	370	25	2	93
1999	F	North West	76	907	813	184	31	2	126
2000	F	North West	76	1,060	982	219	37	3	146
2001	F	North West	93	1,214	1,064	266	46	4	168
2002	F	North West	125	1,442	1,226	257	57	3	191

Table 4: Rates of diagnoses of genital herpes (first attack) by sex and age group, GUM clinics, North West England, 1998–2002

			Rates (per 100,000 population)						
	Sex	Region	13–15	16–19	20–24	25–34	35–44	45+	Total
1998	M	North West	1	24	72	135	29	5	19
1999	M	North West	0	21	73	52	30	5	19
2000	M	North West	0	22	75	53	29	6	19
2001	M	North West	0	24	82	65	28	7	22
2002	M	North West	1	28	84	54	32	6	21
1998	F	North West	7	117	146	181	22	4	28
1999	F	North West	7	141	151	64	29	4	30
2000	F	North West	11	140	153	68	27	5	31
2001	F	North West	18	161	172	80	31	6	36
2002	F	North West	15	150	181	74	30	5	35

Table 5: Rates of diagnoses of genital warts (first attack) by sex and age group, GUM clinics, North West England, 1998–2002

			Rates (per 100,000 population)						
	Sex	Region	13–15	16–19	20–24	25–34	35–44	45+	Total
1998	M	North West	12	267	815	973	112	20	138
1999	M	North West	14	310	858	362	117	24	146
2000	M	North West	8	288	871	371	118	21	143
2001	M	North West	5	322	867	392	128	21	149
2002	M	North West	8	300	904	377	132	22	151
1998	F	North West	50	766	708	553	56	9	119
1999	F	North West	72	748	762	201	66	10	124
2000	F	North West	40	761	720	201	61	11	120
2001	F	North West	54	751	718	212	65	10	123
2002	F	North West	47	757	649	193	67	12	119

Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust (Overspend)

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the forecasted level of overspend is for this financial year for the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust. [151463]

Dr. Ladyman: I am advised that Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital National Health Service Trust is forecasting a surplus of £4.1 million for the 2003–04 financial year.

Sir Roy Meadow

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has held with the General Medical Council about the possibility of accelerating its investigation into the record of Sir Roy Meadow. [151092]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* No such discussions have taken place.

South Sefton Primary Care Trust

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the South Sefton Primary Care Trust *(a)* network and *(b)* boundaries are; [150143]

(2) how many *(a)* diabetologists, *(b)* senior nurses, *(c)* paediatric diabetologists, *(d)* paediatric senior nurses, *(e)* psychologists, and *(f)* other diabetes specialist staff there are in South Sefton Primary Care Trust. [150144]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally. However it can be obtained from the following website: http://www.drfoster.co.uk/diabetes/objectlist.aspx?obid=271&w=1&p=1

The website can be accessed via www.diabetes.org.uk.

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to know how many staff were employed by strategic health authorities in September 2003. [149563]

Mr. Hutton: Subject to standard data integrity checks, current plans are to publish these figures—as part of the September 2003 national health service workforce census results on the Department's website—in February 2004.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the latest financial position of each strategic health authority is, broken down by *(a)* forecast outturn, *(b)* financial risk, *(c)* brokerage required to achieve financial balance and *(d)* loans taken from the NHS Bank. [150462]

Mr. Hutton: Audited information on the strategic health authorities (SHAs) own financial position will be published in their individual annual accounts. This data will be available centrally in the autumn. We have no plans to publish un-audited information.

We have no plans to publish information on financial risk. It can be subjective, is affected by rapidly changing conditions and management action and as a result could be misleading.

We have no plans to provide brokerage to SHAs for the purpose of achieving financial balance.

In 2003–04, the NHS Bank has provided £152 million special assistance to the following SHAs:

Surrey and Sussex—£40 million

Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire—£70 million

Thames Valley—£25 million

Kent and Medway—£17 million

Tees, East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on travel by directors of Tees, East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust in each of the past three years. [143239]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures are only available for 2002–03. In this year, £7,122 was spent on travel by the directors of the Tees, East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust.

Source:

Tees, East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Weston Area Health Trust

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department will appoint a Director of Infection Control for the Weston Area Health Trust. [147604]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Designation of the director of infection prevention and control is a local decision, but I can report that such a director has been designated for the Weston Area Health Trust.

Working Time Directive

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the value is of bids that have been submitted by NHS hospital trusts for extra resources to respond to the EU Working Time Directive; [149340]

(2) what request in respect of the EU Working Time Directive he has received from the Oxford Radcliffe NHS Trust for *(a)* extra medical staff and *(b)* extra resources. [149342]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not held centrally. Local delivery plans and financing of these plans is a matter for strategic health authorities and local trusts, including planning for implementation of the Working Time Directive for doctors in training.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the action being taken by the Government to help smaller general hospitals respond to the EU Working Time Directive. [149343]

Mr. Hutton: A substantial programme of work is currently under way within the national health service to support implementation of the Working Time Directive (WTD). This includes 20 national WTD pilot sites and innovative work locally as part of a larger programme of modernisation and improvement to services.

Strategic health authorities are currently working with their respective trusts locally on plans to achieve compliance for doctors in training from August 2004.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Appeals

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many appeals against benefit decisions were *(a)* heard and *(b)* decided in the appellant's favour in the last 12 months, broken down by benefit; and if he will make a statement. [147814]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter Christina Townsend Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Paul Holmes, dated 27 January 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding how many appeals against benefit decisions were *(a)* heard and *(b)* decided in the appellant's favour in the last 12 months broken down by benefit.

The attached table shows the figures for the period December 2002-November 2003.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Number and Percentage of Appeals found in favour of the Appellant by benefit: December 2002 to November 2003

	Benefit Caseload	*Cleared at Hearing*	*Found in Favour*	*% found in Favour*
Attendance Allowance	[1]1,358,400	7,770	3,525	45.4%
Child Benefit/One Parent Benefit	[2]7,342,400	510	80	15.7%
Child Support Cases	[3]888,300			
Child Support Assessments	..	2,205	890	40.4%

Number and Percentage of Appeals found in favour of the Appellant by benefit: December 2002 to November 2003

	Benefit Caseload	Cleared at Hearing	Found in Favour	% found in Favour
Child Support departures appeal	..	960	345	35.9%
Child Support departures referral	..	180	105	58.3%
Child Support Reforms	..	-	-	-
Child Tax Credit	[4]4,220,700	70	-	0.0%
COEG	..	10	-	0.0%
Compensation Recovery Unit	..	1,275	985	77.3%
Council Tax Benefit	[5]4,657,400	655	170	26.0%
Disability Living Allowance	[6]2,526,700	69,695	36,975	53.1%
Disability Working Allowance	..	5	-	0.0%
Disabled Person's Tax Credit	..	90	20	22.2%
Home Responsibility Protection	..	20	-	0.0%
Housing/Council Tax Benefit	..	2,365	775	32.8%
Housing Benefit	[7]3,807,700	2,205	675	30.6%
Incapacity Benefit	[8]2,400,500	,	,	,
Incapacity Benefit (Personal Capability Assessment)	..	41,570	20,130	48.4%
Incapacity Benefit (not Personal Capability Assessment)	..	4,685	1,830	39.1%
Personal Capability Assessment (not incapacity benefit)	..	560	240	42.9%
Income Support	[9]4,015,700	12,355	4,260	34.5%
Industrial Death Benefit	[10]11,900	5	-	0.0%
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit	[11]343,000	14,975	5,825	38.9%
Carer's Allowance	[12]414,200	760	120	15.8%
Jobseeker's Allowance	[13]911,300	7,625	2,175	28.5%
Lookalikes	..	5	5	100.0%
Maternity Allowance	[14]24,300	85	10	11.8%
Not Known	..	45	10	22.2%
Others (extinct/rare benefits)	..	835	180	21.6%
State Pension	[15]11,266,100	1,015	105	10.3%
Severe Disablement Allowance	[16]315,300	475	235	49.5%
Social Fund—Funeral Payments	[17]70,000	1,735	300	17.3%
Social Fund—Sure Start Maternity Grants (formerly Maternity Payments)	[18]289,000	510	55	10.8%
Vaccine damage appeals tribunals	..	40	5	12.5%
Widow's Benefit/Bereavement Benefit	[19]240,500	825	90	10.9%
Working Families Tax Credit	..	1,020	200	19.6%
Working Tax Credit	[20]1,705,500	10	-	0.0%

Appeals Figures Notes:
All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available. Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
"-" denotes nil or negligible.
"," Denotes not applicable
*Benefit caseload refers to the number of people "on benefit" at the given time in the footnotes for each benefit. Despite this there are footnotes for some benefits such as funeral payments that are one off grants thus are not constantly claimed
Source:
100% download of the Generic Appeals Processing System.
Benefit Figures Notes:
Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred, except where noted.
"," Denotes not applicable
".." Denotes not available
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5% Samples, except where noted.
[1] As of Aug 2003
[2] As of Aug 2003. Data supplied is that of No of families Appealing.
[3] As of Aug 2003. Total number of live and assessed cases. Up to 200,000 cases are missing due to transferral to new system
[4] As of Oct 2003. 10% sample.
[5] As of Aug 2003. 100% sample.
[6] As of Aug 2003
[7] As of Aug 2003. 100% sample.
[8] As of Aug 2003.
[9] As of Aug 2003. Caseload includes both Working Age and Pension Credit claimants.
[10] As of Sep 2003. 100% sample.
[11] As of Jun 2003. 10% sample.
[12] As of Feb 2003. Cases in payment. 100% sample.
[13] As of Aug 2003
[14] As of Aug 2003
[15] As of Mar 2003
[16] As of Aug 2003
[17] Figures are claims for financial year—April 2002 to March 2003. Claims are expressed to the nearest thousand. Data source: Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System
[18] Figures are claims for financial year—April 2002 to March 2003. Claims are expressed to the nearest thousand. Data Source: Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System
[19] As of Mar 2003
[20] As of Oct 2003. Figures for benefits which no longer exist have been excluded. 10% sample

Child Maintenance

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of child support cases are being assessed using the *(a)* old and *(b)* new system for calculating child maintenance liability. [144851]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 18 December 2003]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Ms Vera Baird dated 27 January 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked how many and what percentage of child support cases are being assessed using the *a)* old and *b)* new system for calculating child maintenance liability.

As at 30 September the Agency held around 1 million cases within its systems. At that date around 30,500 cases (just over 3%) had calculations made under the new arrangements for calculating child maintenance liability. The balance refers to cases either progressing toward a calculation or assessment or to cases assessed in accordance with the previous arrangements.

Child Support

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress is being made with transferring individual child support cases which are still subject to the rules of the old system of child support to the new system; and if he will make a statement. [150994]

Mr. Pond: I refer the hon. Member to the Written Answer I gave the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1092W.

Plans for transferring the old scheme caseload to the new scheme have yet to be finalised.

Citizenship Pension

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will commission further investigation into the effects of the proposal in the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs' Report, Aspects of the Economics of an Ageing Population, for a citizenship pension based on years of residence. [150395]

Malcolm Wicks: We are assessing the implications of the recommendations made by the House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs in their report Aspects of the Economics of an Ageing Population and will respond in due course.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* Central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150276]

Maria Eagle: At 23 January 2004 the total space occupied by the Department for Work and Pensions in London is 286,569 square metres. This covers all the space we occupy within the London Government Office Region whose external border is the M25.

This figure includes space that is used for offices for civil servants and that used to provide public caller facilities.

The space we occupy is not divided between Central and Greater London but is recorded according to which district it is located in.

The breakdown of space occupied by district is in the table.

Breakdown of space occupied by district

District	*M*[2]
Brent Harrow and Hillingdon	28,403
Central London[1]	67,399
City and East London	22,061
Lambeth Southwark and Wandsworth	44,471
North East London	25,102
North London	18,683
South East London	16,162
South London	37,510
West London	26,778
London Government Office Region	286,569

[1] Central London includes the areas covered by the London Boroughs of Islington Camden, City of Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea.

Notes:

The districts are Jobcentre Plus districts. Figures include space occupied by all DWP businesses.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the total expenditure on *(a)* information campaigns and *(b)* advertising was for his Department in each year since 1997; [146015]

(2) what the total expenditure on information campaigns and advertising was for his Department for each year since 1997. [146007]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001. Between that date and March 2003, the Department spent a total of £35,031,354 alerting people to their rights, responsibilities and entitlements through information campaigns. Of this sum, £18,788,328 was spent on advertising using television, radio, cinema and press media. Information broken down by year is in the table.

£

	Total publicity costs	*Advertising costs*
June 2001 to March 2002	22,727,979	13,787,594
April 2002 to March 2003	12,303,375	5,000,734
Totals	35,031,354	18,788,328

Notes:

1. Machinery of Government changes during the period 1997 to 2001 mean that like-for-like figures are not obtainable without disproportionate cost. During this time communications activity was accounted for under different systems in the agencies, Headquarters and the Department for Education and Employment, part of which transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions.
2. All costs exclude VAT
3. Advertising costs are total publicity costs excluding all production costs.
4. Information campaigns costing under £250,000 have not been included as a disproportionate cost would be incurred in compiling these figures.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of staff employed within his Department are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145985]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Douglas Alexander) on 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, volume 416, column 1130–34W.

Departmental Staff Sickness

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* total number of days lost due to staff sickness and *(b)* average number of days off sick per member of staff in his Department and each of its executive agencies was in each of the last five years. [148850]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the tables.

Table 1—Sickness absence information for DWP and the former DSS

Department	Year	Working days lost	Working days available	Average number of working days Lost
DSS	1999–2000	1,057,549.2	22,086,808.8	12.0
DSS	2000–01	1,085,307.5	22,024,101.1	12.3
DSS	2001–02	1,039,208.8	22,895,495.2	11.3
DWP	2002–03	1,674,435.3	34,054,324.0	12.3

Table 2—Sickness absence information for the DWP businesses in 2002–03

Business	Working Days Lost	Working Days Available	Average Number of Working Days Lost
Child Support Agency	147,761.9	2,891,913.6	12.8
Disability and Carers Service	93,163.4	1,928,378.8	12.1
Jobcentre Plus	1,141,339.7	21,987,970.3	13.0
Pension Service	139,165.4	3,504,399.6	9.9
Appeals Service	12,099.3	237,570.5	12.7

Notes:

1. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was created in June 2001. Due to the migration of businesses into and out of the newly forming Department, and differences in calculation methods, figures for the Department as a whole are only available from April 2002.
2. The information in table 1 covers the years April 1999 to March 2002 relating to the former Department of Social Security (DSS), the main predecessor Department in place prior to the formation of DWP, and for DWP for April 2002 to March 2003.
3. Figures have been provided for DSS and DWP for each full operational year since 1999. Sickness absence information for the current year, April 2003 to March 2004, will be available in spring 2004.
4. The information in table 2 relates to the DWP businesses for the period April 2002 to March 2003.
5. The number of working days lost and working days available recorded for the DWP businesses in table 2 do not match the total figures for DWP in table 1. This is because the figures in table 2 relate only to the current DWP businesses.

Disability Living Allowance

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 690W, on disability living allowance, how many claimants are aged under 60 years in each case. [147778]

Maria Eagle: The numbers of DLA claimants, under 60 years of age in the geographical areas requested, are contained in the tables. Since the earlier answer was given, figures for the quarter ending 31 August 2003 have now become available and are set out in the tables.

DLA recipients in Edinburgh local authority by age as at 31 August 2003

Thousands

	All	Under 60	60 and over
All	18.7	12.5	6.2
Higher rate care and higher rate mobility	3.0	1.8	1.1
Higher rate care and lower rate mobility	0.9	0.9	—
Higher rate care only	*0.3	*0.2	*0.1
Middle rate care and higher rate mobility	3.1	1.5	1.6
Middle rate care and lower rate mobility	2.5	2.3	*0.2
Middle rate care only	0.6	0.6	*0.1
Lower rate care and higher rate mobility	1.9	1.2	0.7
Lower rate care and lower rate mobility	0.9	0.7	*0.2
Lower rate care only	1.2	1.0	*0.3
Higher rate mobility	3.2	1.6	1.7
Lower rate mobility	0.9	0.7	*0.2

DLA recipients in Edinburgh, West by age as at 31 August 2003

Thousands

	All	Under 60	60 and over
All	2.6	1.7	0.9
Higher rate care and higher rate mobility	*0.3	*0.2	*0.1
Higher rate care and lower rate mobility	*0.2	*0.2	—
Higher rate care only	*0.1	*0.1	*0.1
Middle rate care and higher rate mobility	*0.4	*0.2	*0.2
Middle rate care and lower rate mobility	*0.4	*0.3	*0.1
Middle rate care only	*0.1	*0.1	—
Lower rate care and higher rate mobility	*0.3	*0.1	*0.1
Lower rate care and lower rate mobility	*0.2	*0.1	*0.1
Lower rate care only	*0.2	*0.2	—
Higher rate mobility	*0.3	*0.1	*0.2
Lower rate mobility	*0.1	*0.1	—

DLA recipients in Scotland by age as at 31 August 2003

Thousands

	All	Under 60	60 and over
All	281.2	172.0	109.2
Higher rate care and higher rate mobility	45.1	26.5	18.6
Higher rate care and lower rate mobility	13.2	11.8	1.4
Higher rate care only	3.7	3.1	0.6
Middle rate care and higher rate mobility	45.5	21.9	23.6
Middle rate care and lower rate mobility	34.1	30.0	4.1
Middle rate care only	8.8	7.5	1.3
Lower rate care and higher rate mobility	34.9	18.1	16.7
Lower rate care and lower rate mobility	13.1	10.7	2.4
Lower rate care only	17.6	12.4	5.2
Higher rate mobility	54.0	21.3	32.7
Lower rate mobility	11.1	8.6	2.6

DLA recipients in Great Britain by age as at 31 August 2003

Thousands

	All	*Under 60*	*60 and over*
All	2,526.7	1,587.5	939.2
Higher rate care and higher rate mobility	385.4	227.8	157.6
Higher rate care and lower rate mobility	113.7	102.5	11.2
Higher rate care only	41.4	35.8	5.6
Middle rate care and higher rate mobility	372.6	189.4	183.2
Middle rate care and lower rate mobility	294.2	263.4	30.8
Middle rate care only	103.7	90.8	12.9
Lower rate care and higher rate mobility	344.7	183.8	160.9
Lower rate care and lower rate mobility	110.6	89.2	21.4
Lower rate care only	190.8	136.7	54.2
Higher rate mobility	467.5	188.3	279.2
Lower rate mobility	102.1	80.0	22.1

Source:
IAD Information Centre.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost would be of increasing the upper age limit on claiming disability living allowance to (i) 70, (ii) 75 and (iii) 80 years; what estimate he has made of the likely number of beneficiaries; and what take-up assumptions are made in this calculation. [150450]

Maria Eagle: The requested information is not available. The effect of increasing the upper age limit for claims to Disability Living Allowance would be to enable people aged 65 and over to claim and qualify for the mobility component and the lowest rate care component of the allowance. Entitlement to these and the other components of the allowance can be reliably established after a claim has only been made and the mobility and care needs of the customer assessed. There are no reliable data available on which estimates could be made of the number of people aged 65 and over who might be entitled to either the mobility component or the lowest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance if they were to make a claim. The higher and middle rate care components of Disability Living Allowance have the same entitlement conditions as Attendance Allowance which is available to people aged 65 and over when they claim help with their disability-related extra costs.

EU Enlargement

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what entitlement to pension credit nationals of the EU accession countries will have if they come to live in the United Kingdom. [151069]

Malcolm Wicks: Under European law, a national of a member state must generally enjoy the same access to social security benefits as a national of the state of residence. Entitlement to income-related benefits and pension credit is subject to the habitual residence test, which nationals of the EU accession countries would need to satisfy. This acts as a deterrent to benefit tourism.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed incapacity benefit in each year since 1997, broken down by the condition that enables them to claim this benefit; and if he will make a statement on trends in claims. [148639]

Maria Eagle: The overall number of people claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) has risen from 2.37 million in August 1997 to 2.4 million in August 2003; this slight increase reflects a number of factors such as demography and changes in the characteristics of those claiming. The rate at which the caseload is increasing has been reduced dramatically and, in recent years, people with mental health disorders are the only broad category of diagnosis not to see a reduction in the numbers claiming.

"Pathways to Work—Helping people into employment", published November 2002, set out a strategy for enabling people on IB to move into work. The first tranche of three pilot areas (Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff; Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute; and Derbyshire) went live from October 2003; indications after the first seven weeks are very encouraging, with positive feedback from customers and over 150 people moving back into work. A further tranche of four areas (Gateshead and South Tyneside; Somerset; Essex; and East Lancashire) are on track to go live in April.

The information is in the table.

Incapacity Benefit claimants by Diagnosis group in each August quarter

Thousands

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
All	2,369.8	2,301.7	2,275.3	2,286.2	2,337.8	2,377.0	2,400.5
Claimants without any diagnosis code on the system	11.7	9.3	5.4	10.0	7.4	4.9	5.0
Certain Infectious and Parasitic Diseases	16.7	17.2	17.2	17.6	18.0	17.6	18.6
Neoplasms	26.1	26.4	28.7	30.1	32.2	33.5	34.6
Diseases of the Blood and Blood forming organs and certaindiseases involving the immune mechanism	3.5	3.7	3.4	3.6	4.0	3.9	4.1
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	43.3	40.8	38.9	36.8	36.3	35.6	35.2
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	594.5	631.2	676.0	718.7	771.8	833.0	878.9
Diseases of the Nervous System	110.1	111.2	111.2	112.6	116.4	122.5	126.2
Diseases of the Eye and Adnexa	14.1	13.7	13.7	13.4	14.2	14.7	14.3
Diseases of the Ear and Mastoid Process	9.5	9.7	9.3	8.9	9.2	9.9	10.0
Diseases of the Circulatory System	264.0	235.3	213.9	195.9	187.4	179.1	169.0
Diseases of the Respiratory System	91.6	84.1	77.7	71.8	70.4	66.4	63.5
Diseases of the Digestive System	41.1	40.4	39.9	40.3	41.2	40.2	39.6
Diseases of the Skin and Subcutaneous System	16.4	16.0	16.1	15.9	16.3	15.4	13.6
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	595.9	569.2	549.1	536.3	535.3	521.2	508.3
Diseases of the Genitourinary System	19.2	18.5	18.0	17.8	17.9	17.5	17.3
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperium	4.7	4.7	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.7	4.4
Certain Conditions Originating in the Perinatal Period	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Congenital Malformations, Deformations and Chromasomal Abnormalities	2.4	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	5.1	5.6

Incapacity Benefit claimants by Diagnosis group in each August quarter

Thousands

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified :	332.9	300.4	281.9	274.7	274.8	272.0	270.8
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	148.6	141.3	142.8	147.9	149.5	150.2	149.5
Factors influencing Health Status and Contact with Health Services	23.5	25.8	24.8	27.0	28.4	29.5	30.1

Notes:
1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands. Totals may not sum due to founding.
2. Numbers are based on 5 per cent. samples, and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
3. All diagnoses are coded using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, published by the World Health Organisation.

Source:
DWP—IAD Information Centre 5 per cent. Samples

Leak Inquiries

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list occasions on which his Department has conducted an inquiry into alleged leaks from members of staff since 1997; and if he will list the occasions on which the names of those persons accused of leaking information from his Department have been made public *(a)* by the Government and *(b)* by way of another source. [147191]

Maria Eagle: Since April 1997, the Department has conducted an investigation into a suspected leak of sensitive information on 31 occasions.

In line with exemptions 1(a) and 7(b) set out in Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, it has been the practice of successive governments not to comment on the outcome of such inquiries in order to safeguard security and investigative arrangements. However, I can confirm that the Department has not made public the name of any individual under investigation. I am not aware of any disclosure by other sources.

Low-income Households

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children *(a)* in England and *(b)* in each English region there were in households with income below half of the national average (i) before housing costs and (ii) after housing costs in each year since 1994–95. [148810]

Mr. Pond: The latest available information relating to the financial year 2001–02 can be found in the publication 'Households Below Average Income 1994–05 to 2001–02', a copy of which is available in the Library.

Year-on-year comparisons of this information at a regional level are not advisable as changes are likely to be small in relation to sampling variation. Results for English regions are presented as percentages of children, not numbers; this is because the data does not provide robust estimates of numbers at this level.

Pension Credit

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners were in recept of pension credit in Scotland as at *(a)* 31 October 2003, *(b)* 30th November 2003 and *(c)* 31 December 2003. [150399]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available for 31 October. The information for 17 October, 30 November and 31 December is given in the table.

Recipients of Pension Credit, Scotland, October—December 2003

17 October 2003		*30 November 2003*		*31 December 2003*	
Households	Individuals	Households	Individuals	Households	Individuals
201,555	234,835	217,065	255,575	223,060	263,290

Notes:
1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures relate to the Geographical Government Office Region (GOR) of Scotland.

Pensioner Couples

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners who receive the basic state pension live together as man and wife but claim two single pension entitlements; what estimate he has made of the additional cost to the Exchequer of such claims compared with the cost if such people claimed only the married persons' entitlement; and if he will make a statement. [150602]

Malcolm Wicks: An individual's entitlement to state pension depends on the national insurance contributions paid during his or her working life. however, for married couples, provision is made for a spouse to become entitled to a state pension based on the other spouse's national insurance contributions. There is no such thing as married persons' entitlements. Therefore, we are unable to provide the information requested.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the annual cost of increasing the state pension in line with the usual UK uprating for UK citizens who reside in countries where their UK state pension is frozen. [150455]

Malcolm Wicks: To bring everyone up to the current rate of State Pension they would receive if they had remained in the UK, but not to pay arrears, could cost around 400 million in 2003–04.

Note:
Costs have been calculated using March 2003 Retirement Pension administrative data and the latest HMT Economic Assumptions.

Procurement (Outsourcing)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his

Department's procurement policy with regard to offshore IT and call centre outsourcing; whether his Department is outsourcing IT and call centre jobs to offshore companies; to which countries his Department has outsourced these jobs; how much his Department has spent on this outsourcing in each of the last two years; and how much has been budgeted for this purpose for the next two years. [147591]

Mr. Browne: The Department has no plans to outsource to countries abroad work performed by DWP call centre staff. The Department contracts for IT delivery work with IT providers, many of whom are worldwide organisations. There have been no specific IT contracts targeted offshore.

Progress2Work

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what proportion of the £40 million allocated to Progress2Work has been spent; [147910]

(2) what the average cost is of each Progress2Work participant who has been found sustained employment; [147912]

(3) what percentage of participants in Progress2Work have been placed in sustained employment. [147913]

Mr. Browne: In April 2001, £40 million was allocated to enable Jobcentre Plus to develop Progress2Work provision. To date approximately 22.5 per cent. of this budget has been spent.

7,797 people had started Progress2Work by the end of November 2003. Of these 1,402 people had been helped into work; 968 were still receiving in work support from their provider and a further 434 were in sustained employment. This represents 5.6 per cent. of the total participants.

Progress2Work is an evolving programme, phased in over 3 stages, with over 50 per cent. of participants joining in the last 6 months. The final phase contracts are still being put in place. The cost of a job and sustained job outcome will continue to drop as more participants move into employment. Currently costs per job outcome come out at £7,229 and at £23,136 per sustainable job.

Progress2Work has been effective at helping this very disadvantaged group back into employment. The proportion of current participants who are in supported job outcomes is approximately 20 per cent. Additionally there is also a consistent increase in the numbers moving from Progress2Work into employment. Costs and outcomes for Progress2Work have not yet stabilised as the programme is still developing.

Transfer Payments

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of transfer payments, including social security benefits and tax credits directed at children and at people of working age, was in each year since 1991–92; and what projections have been made for the cost in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* future years. [147377]

Mr. Pond: The information for social security benefits administered by the Department for Work and Pensions is shown in the table, and is consistent with forecasts published in the pre-Budget Report on 10 December 2003.

The information is drawn from DWP's Benefit Expenditure Table 5 (Benefit expenditure by age-based client group, Great Britain, 1991–92 to 2005–06), which may be found on the Department for Work and Pensions website at: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure, asp. Forecasts of expenditure will next be updated at Budget 2004.

Tax credit expenditure and forecasts, and child benefit expenditure and forecasts from 2003–04 onwards, are the responsibility of the Inland Revenue.

£ million

	Children[1]	*People of working age*
Outturn		
1991–92	8,411	22,342
1992–93	9,767	26,727
1993–94	10,676	30,035
1994–95	10,827	31,251
1995–96	11,277	32,913
1996–97	11,659	33,640
1997–98	11,816	32,791
1998–99	12,105	32,685
1999–2000	13,129	31,989
2000–01	13,144	31,215
2001–02	13,729	31,827
Estimated outturn		
2002–03	14,386	32,421
Plans		
2003–04	5,410	33,251
2004–05	4,022	34,296
2005–06	1,802	35,515

[1] Spending on children drops in 2003–04 as a result of the transfer of child benefit to the Inland Revenue; during 2003–04 and 2004–05, spending on children is also reduced by the transfer of child elements of income support and income-based jobseekers allowance to child tax credit.

War Disablement Pensioners

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the £10 earnings disregard for war disablement pensioners applying for income-related benefits was last uprated; what the value of the disregard would be on 1 April had it been uprated in line with the Rossi Index; and how many war disablement pensioners are benefiting from the £10 earnings disregard. [149536]

Malcolm Wicks: There is no specific earnings disregard for people receiving a war pension, although they can benefit from the standard disregards available to anyone claiming undertaking part-time work while claiming an income-related benefit.

However, in recognition of the special nature of war disablement pension, there is a disregard of these payments when assessing entitlement to income-related benefits. This was set at £5 when income support was introduced in April 1988, and would currently stand at £8.15 had it been uprated in line with the Rossi index; it was increased to its current level of £10 in April 1990, and carried over at the same level for the new pension credit when it was introduced in October 2003.

In the case of housing benefit and council tax benefit, most local authorities disregard war pensions in full and all but two disregard more than the statutory £10; from April this year, local authorities will get extra subsidy of up to 75 per cent. for any local discretionary scheme they operate.

The most recent figures show that 8,800 income support recipients benefit from the £10 disregard; the number of people receiving jobseekers allowance (income based) who benefit from this disregard is nil or negligible. Figures are not yet available for pension credit.

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred and are based on a 5 per cent. sample so are subject to a degree of sampling variation.

Source:
DWP Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample

Winter Fuel Payments

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many households in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland qualify for the winter fuel payment; how many individuals in each receives a winter fuel payment; and what the estimated expenditure on winter fuel payment was in each country in 2003–04. [150291]

Malcolm Wicks: Full information about payments made this winter will not be available until after 30 March, the final date for submitting claims. It is not possible to say how many households will qualify for the Winter Fuel Payment, or how many individuals will receive a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2003–04.

However based on the figures for 2002–03 we estimate the expenditure on Winter Fuel Payments for winter 2003–04 to be as follows:

Forecast expenditure on Winter Fuel Payments for 2003–04

£ million

Country	*Forecast Expenditure*
England	1,610
Wales	100
Scotland	170
Northern Ireland	50

Note:
Costs rounded to the nearest £10 million.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 28 January 2004

PRIME MINISTER

East Midlands Airport

14. **David Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister, when he next plans to use East Midlands Airport on official business. [151111]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so.

TREASURY

Bribery

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many reports of evidence of overseas bribery or suspected bribery by a UK company have been passed to the Inland Revenue's Special Compliance Officer by Inland Revenue staff since November 1997; and how many of these reports were passed on by Inland Revenue to the *(a)* prosecution and *(b)* law enforcement agencies. [151442]

Dawn Primarolo: Section 19 of the Anti-Terrorism (Crime and Security) Act 2001 provides a gateway for the Revenue to pass information about a possible criminal offence of bribery to other agencies where the evidence warrants such a disclosure. No such gateway existed before.

The Inland Revenue does not keep central records of cases referred to other agencies, but does not believe that the section 19 gateway has been used to date to refer a case of suspected bribery.

Currency Speculation

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implications of taxing currency speculation. [150783]

John Healey: The Government remain to be convinced that a tax on currency speculation would be particularly effective in stabilising international capital flows. Indeed, a report by the European Commission—"Responses to the Challenges of Globalisation", February 2002—concludes that a currency transaction tax may actually increase volatility, since trading volumes would be likely to fall significantly following its introduction.

There are also a number of practical issues concerning the coverage and enforcement of a currency speculation tax that would need to be resolved before, as is often suggested, it could become a feasible source of development finance. In particular, the Government are concerned that it would be almost impossible to achieve global coverage for such a tax, creating huge scope for evasion. Even if we could secure agreement among the G7, without global application speculative foreign exchange transactions would gravitate to those jurisdictions which did not enforce the tax. This would make poorly regulated offshore financial centres more attractive to speculators, increasing the threat of instability in the financial system.

The Government are open to exploring the full range of options for raising finance for development and the Chancellor has proposed the International Finance Facility, a new mechanism which would raise significant additional resources. The Facility would be built on developed countries' long-term commitments to increased aid flows and, on this basis, would leverage additional resources from international capital markets. The Facility would seek to double aid from US$ 50 billion a year today to $100 billion a year in the years up to 2015—the sum needed to meet the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals.

Ivory

Mr. Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list *(a)* ivory and *(b)* ivory products seized by HM Customs and Excise in each of the last five years. [150961]

John Healey: Customs has made the following seizures of ivory and ivory products in each of the last five years:

	Ivory tusks		*Other items containing ivory*		
Calendar year	*Number of seizures*	*Number of items seized*	*Number of Seizures*	*Number of items seized*	*Total number of seizures*
2003	7	22	23	3324	30
2002	4	5	18	74	22
2001	6	8	27	649	33
2000	6	19	19	84	25
1999	7	12	11	13	18
Total	30	66	98	4,144	128

Tax Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff will be employed in each of the two new tax credit contact centres; where they will be located; and when they will become operational. [147655]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 13 January 2004]:* The two new Tax Credit Contact Centres—in Newcastle upon Tyne and Bathgate (West Lothian)—will each employ the equivalent of 500 new full time staff dedicated to answering tax credits calls. The Bathgate Contact Centre will, in addition, house the equivalent of a further 300 existing full time staff. The tax credits staff will be taking calls in time to support the continued delivery of tax credits from April 2004.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the habitual residence test in regard to child and working tax credits will apply to nationals of the EU accession states if they come to live in the United Kingdom. [151070]

Dawn Primarolo: No, the habitual residence test does not apply to tax credits just as it has never applied to Child Benefit. However, to qualify for tax credits, a person must be both present and ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom.

Tax Deductibility

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times staff at the Inland Revenue have denied tax deductibility on payments, under section 577A of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988, on the basis that the payment was *(a)* a suspected bribe and *(b)* business entertainment on an overseas contract, since November 1997. [151441]

Dawn Primarolo: Section 577A of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 denies, for the purpose of computing business profits, a deduction on expenditure incurred on any payment, the making of which constitutes an offence in the UK, or would do so if the payment were made in the UK. The onus is upon the taxpayer not to claim a deduction on any such expenditure. The Inland Revenue does not keep central records of expenditure disallowed from deduction by its inspectors under this provision.

TRANSPORT

Advanced Driving Instructor Exams

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the introduction of the new Advanced Driving Instructor part 1 examination; and what skills the examination will assess which are not covered by existing tests. [150015]

Mr. Jamieson: The driving instructor registration scheme involves periodic re-assessment of competence. We intend to use modern technology to assess instructor standards in an effective and efficient manner, as part of their supervision arrangements.

The new computer-based assessment will comprise a multiple-choice question test of knowledge and understanding of driving theory and instruction, plus a moving-image hazard perception test. The knowledge and understanding test draws on a bank of over 900 questions and is more comprehensive than when most instructors qualified.

Hazard perception testing has been a key part of the qualification process for learner car drivers, lorry drivers, bus drivers, motor cyclists, potential instructors and driving examiners since November 2002. Extending it to driving instructors who have not been assessed in this key skill will help their standards maintenance and professionalism and result in a driving instructor profession better placed to deliver high-quality instruction.

We want to ensure that when the public, often young people, buy driving lessons they can have confidence that the instructor they choose will have kept up to date with developments in the learning-to-drive syllabus and be familiar with how the hazard perception test works.

Central Railway

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the findings of the Strategic Rail Authority's latest study on the Central Railway proposal; and if he will make a statement. [151250]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* We have no plans to do so at present given the commercial sensitivity.

Civil Service (Disabled People)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the number of employees in his Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148993]

Mr. McNulty: Employees in the Department for Transport, who have informed the Department that they have a disability, are recorded in the following table. The figures given are at April 2003.

Type of disability	*Count*
Hearing	13
Learning difficulties	[1]
Mental illness	[1]
Mobility impairment	12
Physical co-ordination difficulties	18
Visual	10
Unspecified[2]	8
Total	62

[1] Indicates that the number is less than 5.
[2] Where a person has informed the Department that they are disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act definition but chosen not to inform the Department about the nature of their impairment/s.

While employees are encouraged to inform the Department that they have a disability, especially where an adjustment may better enable them to work to the best of their ability, they are not required to do so. It is likely that the numbers of disabled employees is actually higher. The Department is actively involved in the Cabinet Office run Disability Working Group. The group seeks to improve information on disabled civil servants both by, examining why employees are reluctant to pass on information on their impairments and, the approaches used to collect information.

Coastguard Service Vehicles

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles used by the coastguard service were built in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* the EU and *(c)* outside the EU, broken down by make of car. [151199]

Mr. Jamieson: The number of vehicles used by the HM Coastguard service is listed in the following table:

Place	*Total*	*Broken down by make of car*
UK	59	Land Rover (29) Vauxhall Astra Estate (20) Ford Escort Estate (7) Leyland Daf (3)
EU	161	Ford Focus Estates (90) Nissan Terrano (67) Nissan Patrol (3) Renault Espace (1)

Place	Total	Broken down by make of car
Outside the EU	174	Toyota Hilux(115) Nissan Nivara (30) Vauxhall Brava (15) Nissan Pick-up (6) Toyota Colorado (4) Mitsubishi (3) Nissan Xtrail (1)

Drivers (Bioptics)

Mr. Heath: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether European nationals who are licensed to drive in other EU member states using bioptics are allowed to drive using bioptics in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [151309]

Mr. Jamieson: One of the principal themes of the second EC Directive on driving licences (Directive 91/439/EEC) is the mutual recognition of licences, and all entitlements gained, between member states. Drivers from other member states who become resident in the UK, however, are subject to UK legislation and procedures. Information provided to such drivers informs them of the requirement to notify the Secretary of State of any medical conditions, including visual defects, that may affect fitness to drive. A driver who notified a visual defect or condition and was found to be unable to meet the required standards in relation to vision would not be licensed to drive in the UK despite the use of bioptic lenses.

Mr. Heath: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of whether the European Directive on Driver Licensing allows the use of bioptics for driving; and if he will make a statement; [151310]

(2) what policy has been formulated by the Honorary Medical Advisory Panel on Driving and Visual Disorders regarding the use of bioptics for driving; and if he will make a statement. [151311]

Mr. Jamieson: Any assessment as to the degree to which the use of bioptic lenses for driving complies with the second EC Directive on driving licences (Directive 91/439/EEC) requires the advice of my Department's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel on Vision and Driving.

The Medical Advisory Panel advises on, rather than formulates, policy in relation to vision and driving. It has considered the issue of bioptic lenses and driving but feels that it is important to gain an understanding of other European member states' views and experience of this aid to vision before definitive advice can be given. I expect to receive the panel's advice, therefore, when the expert medical working group recently established by the EC Committee on the Driving Licence has considered the issue and the results of its discussions are known. The working group is expected to meet three or four times during 2004 and to report its results in approximately 18 months.

Driving Instructors

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many attempts approved driving instructors will be permitted to pass the test; whether ADIs will be removed from the register if they fail the test; when the Government intend to bring in these changes; and if he will make a statement. [149828]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Driving instructors will not be limited in the number of attempts they are allowed to pass the computer-based assessment we are adding to their supervision arrangements. Only if an instructor was unable to pass the assessment at the end of a two-year period would action be taken to remove the person from the register.

We intend to introduce the assessment this autumn. It will comprise a multiple-choice question test of knowledge and understanding of driving theory and instruction, plus a moving-image hazard perception test. The knowledge test draws on a bank of over 900 questions and is more comprehensive than when most instructors qualified.

Hazard perception testing has been a key part of the qualification process for learner car drivers, lorry drivers, bus drivers, motor cyclists, potential instructors and driving examiners since November 2002. Extending it to driving instructors who have not been assessed in this key skill will help their standards maintenance and professionalism and result in a driving instructor profession better placed to deliver high-quality instruction.

We want to ensure that when the public, often young people, buy driving lessons they can have confidence that the instructor they choose will have kept up to date with developments in the learning-to-drive syllabus and be familiar with how the hazard perception test works.

East Midlands Airport

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he was notified that East Midlands airport was planning to change its name. [151060]

Mr. McNulty: The Department have received no formal notification from Manchester Airports Group, the owner of East Midlands airport, about the change of name. There is no requirement to notify the Department as it is a commercial decision for the airport operator.

Edinburgh Airport (Noise Pollution)

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of households which will be subjected to *(a)* a noise level of (i) 63dBa Leq or more and (ii) 69dBa Leq or more and *(b)* an increase in noise level of 3dBa Leq or more directly as a result of the increased use of the existing runway at Edinburgh airport as outlined in the recent White Paper on Aviation. [150974]

Mr. McNulty: This information is set out in the Scottish Consultation Document and supporting technical reports. These estimate the number of people who would be affected by different levels of noise under a range of runway options at Edinburgh airport including maximum use of the existing main runway, greater use of the existing crosswind runway and development of a new close parallel runway. Our analysis suggests that by 2030, under the maximum use option, and assuming a 8dBA technology improvement,

there would be an increase of 300 people affected within the 63 dBA 16 hour Leq contour with no increase at the 69dBA 16 hour Leq contour. The equivalent figures with increased use of the crosswind runway are 800 and 200 respectively.

The numbers of houses within these contours in the maximum use case is estimated to be 400 at 63 dBA and 100 at 69 dBA. Under the crosswind option the equivalent figures are 600 and 100 respectively.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether all Information Technology hardware and software products are being properly utilised in his Department. [151057]

Mr. McNulty: The Department maintains a list of approved hardware and software products and specific approval is required for any purchase not on that list. Microsoft desktop and server software is procured through Office of Government Commerce licensing arrangements. These licences are managed using software tools at the Microsoft licensing site. Other key software is licensed under a corporate agreement with Novell and is audited annually by them. The Department also utilises asset tracking and discovery software to monitor what other hardware and software is being used on the Department's network.

Liquid Petroleum Gas

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many tonnes of *(a)* 1,3-butadiene, *(b)* benzene, *(c)* particulates and *(d)* sulphur dioxide emissions he estimates have been saved as a result of the liquid petroleum gas duty rebate. [151037]

Mr. Jamieson: It is not possible to give a precise estimate. Liquefied petroleum gas is a clean fuel which results in very low emissions of a number of key air pollutants. It can have particular benefits, for example, when it is used as a substitute for diesel fuel in polluted urban areas. The nature and scale of the emissions savings, however, will depend on a number of factors, including the type of vehicle and fuel which is being replaced by LPG, and how and where it is being driven.

Mobile CCTV

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether funds retained by police authorities from fines imposed for exceeding speed limits may be used to set up mobile CCTV systems. [150019]

Mr. Jamieson: They cannot be used for this purpose. All fines resulting from speeding offences are paid to the courts. Funds returned to the safety camera partnerships (all these include the police) under the cost recovery scheme may only be used to cover the cost of purchasing, placing and operating speed and traffic light enforcement (safety) cameras.

Motor Vehicle Recovery

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles were recovered from motorways in the last year for which figures are available by *(a)* a private breakdown recovery service and *(b)* a contractor engaged by the police. [151249]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* This information is not available.

Road Accidents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road accident *(a)* injuries and *(b)* fatalities there were in each of the past 10 years, broken down by (i) children and (ii) adults. [150647]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is shown in the following table. These statistics have been published in the annual publications "Road Accidents Great Britain" (1993 to 2001) and "Road Casualties Great Britain" (2002), copies of which are in the Library.

Casualties from road accidents by severity and age: 1993–2002

Casualties

	Fatal			*Injuries*		
	Child	*Adult*	*Age missing*	*Child*	*Adult*	*Age missing*
1993	306	3,493	15	42,287	254,394	5,640
1994	299	3,320	31	44,853	260,512	6,344
1995	270	3,330	21	43,519	257,343	6,204
1996	270	3,304	24	44,567	266,682	5,731
1997	255	3,344	0	44,291	274,312	5,601
1998	206	3,213	2	43,239	272,708	5,844
1999	221	3,183	19	41,830	267,861	7,196
2000	191	3,211	7	39,524	269,511	7,839
2001	219	3,199	32	38,050	263,729	8,080
2002	179	3,221	31	34,510	257,015	7,649

Road Noise

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on Government strategy for decreasing the noise disturbances arising from main roads in residential areas, with particular reference to relevant measures in the Traffic Management Bill. [148369]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government recognise that traffic noise from main roads can be a significant nuisance, particularly where they run close to or through local communities. The Government are committed to reducing such noise and our strategy is to set vehicle construction standards that reduce noise at source wherever feasible and desirable on safety grounds. We also encourage the mitigation of noise with insulation, barriers, traffic management measures and low noise surfaces. The implementation of mitigation measures on the trunk road and motorway network, for which the Highways Agency is responsible, concentrates first on the most pressing locations. It is doing this by a variety of means, most importantly through a programme of re-surfacing all concrete roads with quieter materials by 31 March 2011 and re-surfacing blacktop roads with quieter materials as and when they require maintenance. In addition, the Government provides funds to local authorities to maintain local roads, though how much they spend and what they spend it on is their choice.

The primary aim of the Traffic Management Bill is to improve the smooth flow of traffic but there are a number of reasons for believing that it will also help with

noise problems. For example, better management of traffic incidents and street works will reduce the disruption caused to traffic and the noise created by slow-moving heavy traffic. It will also minimise the incentive for motorists to divert along adjacent residential roads.

The Government are also encouraging a substantial growth in investment in public transport. This will help reduce traffic noise by providing the public with a greater choice over how they travel.

Royal Train

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times the royal train has been used in each of the last three years, broken down by journey. [151200]

Mr. McNulty: The royal train plays an important role in enabling members of the royal family to carry out their extensive official engagements throughout the UK. It is principally used for overnight travel and provides secure accommodation and secure mobile office facilities. In 2002–03, the train was used for 19 journeys; in 2001–02, for 15 journeys and 17 journeys in 2000–01. Full details of these journeys are provided in the appendices to the Annual Reports on the Grant-in-aid for Royal Travel by Air and Rail. Copies of these reports, which are prepared annually, are placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when determining where to site a speed camera, how far from the proposed site of a camera an accident can have occurred for it to justify that siting. [147154]

Mr. Jamieson: The distance from the proposed site within which accidents are counted takes account of the circumstances of each site, and may be between 400 and 1,500 metres, for fixed speed cameras.

Traffic Management Bill

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the roles and duties that the Traffic Management Bill will accord to traffic managers and local traffic authorities to *(a)* respond to and *(b)* prevent traffic gridlock. [148371]

Mr. Jamieson: The Traffic Management Bill will require local authorities to appoint a Traffic Manager responsible for keeping traffic moving in their area. Neighbouring authorities will also have to work together to ensure traffic flows across the network as a whole.

Local authorities will need not only to manage existing problems but also to plan ahead, taking account of events they know about and making contingency arrangements for unforeseen incidents. They will have to do this in a way that does not compromise their other responsibilities such as for improving road safety.

The Bill will give authorities a number of additional powers to meet their new responsibilities. For example, they will be helped to deal with congestion caused by poorly planned and lengthy street works by greater control over when and where utility companies carry out street works. These powers will include the ability to specify what day of the week works can be carried out and at what times. They will be able to prevent certain roads from being dug up repeatedly by banning works on that road until a specified date. Any utility company wanting to carry out street works could be required to apply for a permit to do so. Utility companies failing to repair a road properly will face fines of up to £5,000.

Local authorities will also be given the ability to ensure that a number of moving traffic contraventions are enforced. This will include, for example, box junction and no right turn rules. These powers already exist in London. The Bill will extend them to cover the rest of England and Wales.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what impact the Traffic Management Bill will have on motorcyclists; and if he will make a statement. [150142]

Mr. Jamieson: The Traffic Management Bill will give national and local highway authorities a number of additional powers and responsibilities to tackle congestion for the benefit of all road users. Authorities will be better able to manage their roads and the traffic using them. Motorcyclists, like other road users, will benefit from the reduced congestion and disruption. In particular, on local roads where much motorcycling takes place, local authorities will have a new network management duty aimed at keeping traffic moving in their area. Neighbouring authorities will also have to work together to ensure traffic flows effectively across the network as a whole. Again, motorcyclists will benefit from the better operation of the road network, along with other road users.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is meant by serious traffic disruption in Part 4 of the Traffic Management Bill. [150201]

Mr. Jamieson: Section 56 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 allows a street authority to direct an undertaker as to the times at which street works can be carried out, where they might otherwise cause serious disruption to traffic. Clause 42 of the Traffic Management Bill makes clear that this power includes the ability to direct not only the times but also the days on which works may or may not be carried out.

Whether or not there is likely to be serious disruption to traffic in the case of a particular proposed works must be determined by a street authority on the facts of the case. Guidance on the use of the current power is set out in the Code of Practice for the Co-ordination of Street Works and Works for Road Purposes and Related Matters, and we intend revising this guidance as part of producing regulations under the Bill. Ultimately, however, the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of the streetwork provisions in the Traffic Management Bill on urban regeneration. [150202]

Mr. Jamieson: The aim of the street works provisions in the Traffic Management Bill are twofold. Firstly to reduce the disruption that these works cause to road

users, businesses and local residents and secondly to ensure that works are carried out to a high standard and to minimise the negative impact they can have on the environment and the appearance of streets. While each of these is an issue for both urban and rural areas, we believe that minimising the negative effect of these works is particularly important in helping to regenerate our cities.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of the Traffic Management Bill on utilities infrastructure investment programmes, with particular reference to *(a)* water and gas mains replacement and *(b)* electricity cable renewal and upgrading. [150203]

Mr. Jamieson: The detail of those parts of the Traffic Management Bill which relate directly to utility works will be set out in regulations. We will be consulting extensively with utilities and utility regulators as part of drawing up these regulations, so that the revised legislative regime takes proper account of their investment programmes and does not put any unnecessary obstacles in the way of their carrying out these necessary works.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans the Government have to consult Ofgem on the additional costs envisaged from the introduction of permit schemes, as set out in the Traffic Management Bill. [150204]

Mr. Jamieson: Ofgem, together with Ofwat and Ofcom, are represented on the legislative working group set up by my Department which considered what provision should be included in the Bill, and which will continue to meet to consider the details of the secondary legislation which will underpin it. This will include looking at proposals for permit schemes and consideration of the possible costs involved. We shall continue to involve Ofgem and the other regulators closely as the proposals for regulations are developed.

Transport (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with representatives of the National Assembly for Wales regarding the expansion of the road network in Wales. [151751]

Mr. Jamieson: None. The expansion of the motorway trunk road network in Wales is entirely a matter for the National Assembly for Wales who have devolved responsibility for these issues.

Vehicle Inspections

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles have been stopped for roadside checks by the Vehicles Inspectorate in London in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many *(a)* were found to have vehicle faults and *(b)* were motor cars and other non-commercial vehicles. [151073]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (formerly the Vehicle Inspectorate) conducts its enforcement activity within a network of 23 enforcement areas covering England, Scotland and Wales. Enforcement Area 15 (Metropolitan) covers the majority of London boroughs. The number of vehicles stopped at the roadside by the Vehicle Inspectorate in Enforcement Area 15 and the percentage found to have roadworthiness faults are shown in the following tables. Figures are only available for the last four years.

Spot checks carried out by the Vehicle Inspectorate (VOSA) between 1999–2000 and 2002–03 in Enforcement Area 15 (Metropolitan Area)

	Number of vehicles checked			
Vehicle category	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
HGV motor vehicles[1]	1,580	1,769	1,435	3,011
HGV trailers	284	337	170	358
HGV emissions	409	413	356	345
PSV vehicles[1]	480	898	851	547
PSV emissions	293	246	332	252

Percentage

	Prohibition rate[2]							
	Immediate prohibitions[3]				*Delayed prohibitions*[4]			
Vehicle category	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
HGV motor vehicles[1]	11.4	10.6	17.2	13.4	12.5	12.0	20.6	14.4
HGV trailers	10.6	8.0	7.6	11.2	12.3	11.6	12.9	16.8
HGV emissions	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.6	1.2
PSV vehicles[1]	4.6	5.1	5.3	7.1	2.3	4.8	7.3	6.4
PSV emissions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.8

[1] Excludes emissions only checks, but includes foreign vehicles.

[2] Only one prohibition notice is issued per vehicle although it may contain a list of defects/offences where more than one has been found. The most serious defect/offence determines whether an immediate or delayed prohibition is issued.

[3] Immediate prohibition rate relates to all vehicles (including foreign vehicles).

[4] Delayed prohibition rate excludes checks on foreign vehicles. The Foreign Vehicles Act does not provide for the issue of delayed prohibitions to foreign vehicles.

Results of light vehicle roadside roadworthiness checks

	Number examined			
Vehicle category	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Cars	249	134	128	113
Taxis and private hire cars	49	32	109	109
Non-testable vehicles	30	32	49	32
Light good vehicles	422	559	1,004	827

Percentage

	Prohibition rate							
	Immediate prohibitions				*Delayed prohibitions*			
Vehicle category	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Cars	14.5	11.9	42.2	39.8	8.8	3.7	7.0	1.8
Taxis and private hire cars	12.2	0.0	38.5	44.0	6.1	15.6	0.9	5.5
Non-testable vehicles	23.3	21.9	30.6	34.4	6.7	15.6	22.4	15.6
Light good vehicles	19.4	18.1	15.9	22.6	11.6	10.0	10.5	9.7

Light vehicle spot checks for emissions

	Number examined			
Vehicle category	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Cars	2,147	1,525	1,972	2,291
Taxis and private hire cars	63	17	26	37
Light good vehicles	306	310	657	645

Percentage

	Prohibition rate							
	Petrol				*Diesel*			
Vehicle category	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Cars	5.8	8.9	10.8	9.9	0.5	1.8	0.8	0.6
Taxis and private hire cars	7.9	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	5.9	7.7	8.1
Light good vehicles	2.0	0.3	0.5	3.9	5.6	1.9	4.0	1.7

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people benefit from the Vehicle Excise Duty exemption for people with the mobility component for disability living allowance; and what is the average amount of money they will save in 2003–04. [150449]

Mr. Jamieson: The latest available figures show that there are 1,548,512 people in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance. Of this figure, 790,000 claim the exemption from Vehicle Excise Duty (VED).

The financial value of a VED exemption is dependent on the age, engine size and carbon dioxide emissions level of a vehicle. This can be within the range of £75 to £165 per annum.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress British forces have made in restricting the poppy harvest in Afghanistan. [150125]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom has a comprehensive strategy to assist Afghanistan to end its opium trade. While our armed forces are not directly involved in the eradication of the opium poppy crop, their deployments with the International Security Assistance Force and the Provincial Reconstruction Team, and our support for local security forces, all help to contribute towards the counter-narcotics programmes of civilian law enforcement and development agencies. They also help the Afghans themselves to create the structures through which they can implement more effectively President Karzai's commitment to deal with both opium farming and trafficking in his country.

Bearskin

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 463W, on bearskins, what species of bear's pelt is used to make the bearskin caps; whether this species is classified as endangered within the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species; what steps the Department takes to ensure the taking of bears is a sustainable practice; and if he will make a statement. [150147]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Bearskin caps are made from the fur of the American black bear. This is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as a species not currently rare or endangered, but which could become so if trade is not regulated, and all exports of American black bear

products from Canada must be accompanied by a CITES export license. CITES species in Canada are managed through the Canadian Wildlife Service and the American black bear is currently classified as not at risk by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

Bugaled Briezh

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military vessel manoevures took place in the vicinity of the Bugaled Briezh between 12.00 noon and 14.00 on 15 January. [150989]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Only two naval vessels were in the immediate vicinity of the Bugaled Briezh—HNLMS Dolfijn and HMS Tyne. HNLMS Dolfijn was surfaced and transitting to the start position of an Anti-Submarine Warfare Exercise. She was some 11 nautical miles away at 1252Z when a French fishing vessel reported the capsize of Bugaled Briezh. HMS Tyne was on Fishery Protection duties and was 22 nautical miles north-east of the trawler at this time. She then proceeded to the scene and was tasked by the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre to co-ordinate the search.

Equipment Programmes

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he is making of equipment programmes in relation to their key war fighting capabilities. [147274]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence White Paper (Cm 6041) noted the need to ensure that defence resources are directed at those capabilities which are most appropriate for future operations. The Department's annual planning round involves a thorough examination of defence costs and capabilities, and includes an assessment of the contribution of equipment programmes in meeting the policy set out in the White Paper.

Foreign Defence Equipment

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many foreign ships have been hired by his Department in each of the last five years. [150409]

Mr. Ingram: Freight-carrying ships chartered by the Ministry of Defence are categorized as either British or non-British registered. In the calendar year 2003, 58 non-British registered freight-carrying ships were chartered. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie) on 15 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 626W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Prosser) for details of all vessels chartered in earlier years.

Specialist ships chartered by the Ministry of Defence are categorized as either British or foreign-owned. The following foreign-owned specialist ships were chartered over the last five calendar years: 1999—eight, 2000—fourteen, 2001—four, 2002—twelve, 2003—nine.

Give as You Earn Scheme

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many and what percentage of staff in his Department contribute to a charity through the Give as You Earn scheme; how much money is donated to charity per month by staff in his Department through the scheme; and what steps he is taking to encourage greater participation in the scheme by staff in his Department. [143903]

Mr. Caplin: The answer to the question is, 1,315 civilian staff (approximately 1.4per cent.) contribute a total of £14,400 each month. These figures include Ministry of Defence Trading Funds.

Of course this represents only a single element of charitable donations in the Department. For example some £30,000 is paid each month direct from payroll to the Civil Service Benevolent Fund.

In 2004 we intend to remind all staff, by individual leaflet, of the benefits of donating to charity through the "Give as you Earn" scheme.

For the armed forces, the latest available figures are from December 2003. In this month 906 Naval Service personnel (2.2per cent.) contributed around £2,100 to the Charity Payroll Giving Scheme, with a further 1,273 personnel (3 per cent.) contributing around £8,800 through Voluntary Deductions from Pay. The Army figures for December show 21,069 personnel (12.26 per cent.) contributed £99,552 and the RAF £15,274 from 2,561 personnel (4.8 per cent.) through their respective Give as you Earn Schemes.

This represents only a single element of charitable donations in the Department. For example the equivalent of £120,000 per month (paid quarterly) is paid to the RAF Benevolent Fund directly from RAF pay.

In previous years the Department have published Defence Council Instructions (DCIs) and produced articles in the three main Service publications (Navy News, Soldier Magazine and RAF News) on the benefits of donating to charity through the "Give as you Earn" schemes. We intend to continue this effort into 2004.

Herbicides

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the UK has bulk-stored herbicides with a view to possible military application; and if he will make a statement. [146707]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence does not bulk-store herbicides.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what complaints have been received about the adequacy of investigations into Iraqi deaths resulting from UK military action; and if he will make a statement. [142615]

Mr. Ingram: We have received a number of letters from members of the public and enquiries from the media some of which have expressed concern about investigations into Iraqi deaths allegedly caused by United Kingdom forces.

The most common concerns expressed have been about the speed with which investigations are carried out, their independence and whether their results would

be made public. In responding we make clear that investigations are thorough, which can take time; that both the Royal Military Police and, if called on, the single-service Prosecuting Authorities are fully independent of the chain of command; and that while the findings of investigations are subject to legal, operational and other security constraints, there may be some circumstances in which we are able to release certain details to entitled persons.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on the use of hoods on Iraqi citizens in the course of their arrest or detention in Iraq. [147708]

Mr. Ingram: Current practice in Iraq is that hoods are not used on Iraqi citizens during or after their arrest.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has received on the smelting plant near Basra which is melting down tanks and armoured vehicles contaminated by depleted uranium; and what efforts are being made to identify and close down such facilities in the area controlled by British forces. [148056]

Mr. Ingram: There is no known legitimate operational smelting plant in the Basra region. A small number of illegal mobile smelting plants used for smuggled copper and aluminium have been found and closed down. There is no evidence they had been used to smelt tanks.

Military vehicles known to have been hit by DU munitions within the southern sector of Iraq controlled by the British military have been clearly marked. Arrangements are currently being negotiated with the US for a contractor to collect and store these military vehicles.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the report on the accident involving two Royal Navy Sea King helicopters in Iraq in March 2003 will be published. [150990]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* As is usual practice, on completion of the accident investigation, a copy of the findings of the Military Aircraft Accident Summary into the Royal Navy Sea King accident of March 2003 will be placed in the Library of the House. That investigation is not yet complete.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of weapons used for the first time in battlefield conditions in the war on Iraq. [151373]

Mr. Ingram: Two weapons were used for the first time in Iraq, Storm Shadow and Maverick missiles.

Operational feedback is that both missiles were accurate and effective against a range of targets.

Overseas Deployments

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1124W, on overseas deployments, if he will list the countries where personnel are deployed other than those where they are stationed; and how many are deployed in each case. [151097]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 67W to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew).

Rape/Violence Against Women

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what measures have been put in place to ensure that complaints of violence against women by UK military personnel employed overseas are properly investigated; [149666]

(2) if he will list the complaints received of violence against women, made against UK military personnel stationed abroad in the last 10 years. [149664]

Mr. Ingram: The armed forces do not tolerate any form of criminal behaviour and have well-established and effective procedures for dealing with allegations. Whether arising in the UK or overseas, complaints are thoroughly investigated and the relevant prosecution authorities consulted. Disciplinary action is taken as appropriate.

For troops serving overseas, the investigating authority is determined by the status and nationality of the complainant, the provisions of any Status of Forces Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding existing between the UK and the host nation.

Complete records of complaints of violence against women by service personnel are not held centrally, and the information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Road Construction (Parker Plan)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies and companies operating on his behalf have had with Parker Plan road compaigners in respect of road construction in or near the south-east corner of Boscombe Down Airfield. [150806]

Mr. Caplin: None.

Royal Naval Reserve

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the Royal Naval Reserve have *(a)* been called up and *(b)* served in Operation Telic; and how many have served for more than one tour. [150862]

Mr. Caplin: Up to 23 January 2004, 446 members of the Royal Naval Reserve had been called out for Operation TELIC, of whom 371 were accepted into service. Seven, all volunteers, have either completed more than one tour of duty or are currently doing so.

Royal Navy Projects

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on the Royal Navy's *(a)* Surface Combatant Maritime Rotorcraft and *(b)* Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapon projects. [149542]

Mr. Ingram: The Surface Combatant Maritime Rotorcraft (SCMR) programme is currently nearing the end of its Assessment Phase. A Main Gate investment decision is expected later this year when, as with any other programme, the decision on Demonstration and Manufacture will be made, with the capability planned to be phased into service around the turn of the decade.

The Future Air to Surface Guided Weapon (FASGW) programme remains early in its concept phase. This includes studies into a range of solutions to provide a future Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW) capability, superseding the Sea Skua missile currently carried by the Royal Navy Lynx helicopters. A final investment decision will be made at the programme Main Gate, currently planned for the second half of this decade, with the capability entering service during the first half of the next decade.

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) his Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147978]

Mr. Caplin: Between 1 January 2003 and 31 December 2003, personnel employed at MOD establishments reported 2,012 passes lost and 90 stolen. During the same period, personnel employed at establishments of MOD agencies reported 882 passes lost and 23 stolen. The passes carry a photograph of the holder and have other features that inhibit their fraudulent replication. Therefore, the loss of such passes, in isolation, is not assessed to pose an increased threat, although this is kept under constant review.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

National Power Supply

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she is taking to ensure that the UK national power supply is protected from sabotage. [151257]

Mr. Timms: The Government provides protective security advice to key sectors and installations that are critical to the country's economic and social well-being. Our experience of domestic terrorist attacks over the past 30 years has shown that these arrangements have made an effective contribution to the counter-terrorism effort.

We provide tailored advice to a variety of industries, as well as to individual companies and public sector organisations, about how to make contingency arrangements and provide protective security. This advice comes from the Security Service and other sources.

This is an ongoing process and, for understandable reasons, it would be inappropriate to give details of what advice is provided to which organisations.

Bio-diesel

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information she has collated on the number of forecourts in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland which sell bio-diesel. [151439]

Mr. Timms: The Department of Trade and Industry does not record the number of forecourts which sell bio-diesel. However, from discussions with biofuels suppliers we estimate the following:

(a) Scotland—13

(b) England—116

(c) Wales—0

(d) Northern Ireland—7

It is worth noting that additionally a significant proportion of biodiesel is supplied in bulk directly to the commercial market.

Broadband

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 845W, on broadband, when she will publish a report on the work and findings of the joint departmental Rural Broadband Team. [150770]

Mr. Timms: The role of the joint DTI/Defra Rural Broadband Unit is to facilitate understanding and promote partnerships between the telecommunications industry, Government agencies and community organisations to spread information and best practice. For instance, the Unit will shortly be publishing a 'Rural Broadband Toolkit' to help rural communities and businesses understand the issues surrounding access to broadband.

The Unit works as part of the wider DTI Broadband Unit and will not be producing a report specifically on its own work.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150273]

Ms Hewitt: The Department currently occupies 80,000 sq metres in central London and an additional 7,000 sq m in Greater London. This excludes agencies but includes space occupied by the Department in buildings where other Government Departments have the lead responsibility.

Competition Commission Report (Littlewoods)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she proposes to publish her decisions arising from the Competition Commission report on the proposed GUS/Reality and Littlewoods Mail Order/Home Trading organisations. [150229]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1453.

Innovation Funding

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will break down how

innovation funding in the areas of *(a)* industrial exploitation of science, *(b)* support for competitiveness, *(c)* space, *(d)* technical and design infrastructure, *(e)* support for construction industry, *(f)* expert advice and other expenditure and *(g)* invest to save projects, as set out in her departmental report 2003, was allocated in 2003–04; and what amounts were allocated in each year since 1997. [147804]

Ms Hewitt: Successive departmental reports have provided breakdowns and explanations of my Department's innovation expenditure, including on Space and Civil Aerospace Research and Development ('CARAD'), before and since the change in the innovation budget structure in 2001–02.

The following table is based on information published in the 1999 and subsequent departmental reports, where more details and explanation can be found. It includes expenditure on 'Support of the construction industry' under 'Industrial Exploitation of Science' and 'Support for Competitiveness' from 2002–03 (following a machinery of government transfer of responsibility in 2001) and on the Invest to Save Budget funded biotechnology portal, 'i-bio.gov.uk', under 'Support for Competitiveness'.

	1997–98 outturn	*1998–99 outturn*	*1999–2000 outturn*	*2000–01 working provision*[1]	*2001–02 outturn*	*2002–03 working provision*[2]	*2003–04 plans*
Knowledge transfer and collaboration	39.3	30.5	32.7	47.2	—	—	—
Innovation promotion and support	78.0	61.2	56.1	66.8	—	—	—
Standards and National Measurement System	56.6	60.0	60.4	61.7	—	—	—
Sector Challenge	4.6	11.5	10.4	4.3	—	—	—
CARAD	24.6	21.0	20.0	20.0	—	—	—
Space[3]	102.4	87.5	88.2	90.0	87.7	85.0	82.5
Industrial exploitation of science	—	—	—	—	67.9	86.8	94.1
Support for competitiveness	—	—	—	—	60.3	73.0	73.4
Technical and design infrastructure	—	—	—	—	69.9	73.7	89.4
Expert advice and other expenditure	—	—	—	—	7.7	3.8	2.7
Total	305.5	271.7	267.8	290.0	293.5	322.3	342.1

[1] Budget structure changed from 2001–02.
[2] 2002–03 outturn will be reported in the 2004 departmental report.
[3] Excludes Office of Science and Technology expenditure on space (except for 2003–04 plans, which include BNSC budgets transferring to the Science budget from 2003–04).
Source:
1999–2003 departmental reports (Cm 4211, March 1999, Table 1.5; Cm 4611, April 2000, Figure 3.7; Cm 5112, March 2001, Figure 4.5; Cm 5416, June 2002, Figure 4.5; and Cm 5916, May 2003, Figure 5.2)

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many miners' compensation claims for respiratory diseases *(a)* have been made, *(b)* have been settled and *(c)* are outstanding in (i) the Jarrow constituency, (ii) South Tyneside and (iii) the UK in each year since 1997. [149913]

Nigel Griffiths: Claims are dealt with on a priority basis, those from the eldest and sickest living miners and their widows being deal with first. Claims that are outstanding may be a lower priority or they may have an outstanding policy issue that is preventing settlement of the claim.

The figures are:

Year claim registered	*Claim receipts*	*Total settlements including denied/ withdrawn (as of 16 January 2004)*	*Number outstanding*
Jarrow			
1997[1]	9	5	4
1998[1]	93	55	38
1999[1]	140	75	65
2000	92	45	47
2001	191	59	132
2002[2]	128	19	109
2003[2]	415	3	412
2004	36	—	36
Total	1,104	261	843
South Tyneside			
1997[1]	15	8	7
1998[1]	298	162	136
1999[1]	344	172	172
2000	276	135	141
2001	560	180	380
2002[2]	371	53	318
2003[2]	1,102	18	1,084
2004	99	—	99
Total	3,065	728	2,337
United Kingdom			
1997[1]	3,219	2,258	961
1998[1]	53,544	35,977	17,567
1999[1]	28,711	17,288	11,423
2000	36,665	18,617	18,048
2001	44,178	18,279	25,899
2002[2]	39,560	10,216	29,344
2003[2]	168,574	3,000	165,574
2004	17,097	29	17,068
Total	391,548	105,664	285,884

[1] The Department was not able to process claims until after the signing of the Claims Handling Agreement, agreed with the claimants' solicitors, on 24 September 1999.
[2] Estate claims put on hold as a lower priority, in agreement with claimants solicitors.
Notes:
1. South Tyneside consists of the Jarrow and South Shields constituencies.
2. Constituency figures can be found on the DTI website www.dti.gov.uk/coalhealth The information is complied in the middle of the month and shows figures for the end of the previous month.

Lottery Revenue

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total value is of Lottery revenue used to support Government-sponsored projects within her Department since 1997. [149629]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* My Department has no policy or operational responsibility for distribution of National Lottery proceeds. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him today by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* purpose and *(b)* outcome was of the meeting convened by her Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Edinburgh South, on 21 January with representatives of North-East Somerset, Mowlen plc. and Nicholas Grimshaw and Partners Ltd. [151804]

Nigel Griffiths: The PUSS met as Construction Minister to discuss construction matters. This was achieved.

National Power Provision

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many power cuts there were in each of the last five years, broken down by *(a)* parliamentary constituency and *(b)* individual power company. [151259]

Mr. Timms: *(a)* Information by constituency is not held centrally either by DTI or OFGEM— it could only be obtained via a detailed information request to companies which would take considerable time and cost.

(b) As part of the Regulatory reporting requirements, all Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) submit data to OFGEM (the Industry Regulator) pertaining to 'Customer Interruptions' (or CI) figures. These are effectively an indication of the number of customers who experience an interruption per 100 customers per year. This type of information is expressed in this way as the DNOs serve widely varying numbers of customers, and it enables a comparison to be made between the relative performances of the DNOs concerned.

The table details the available Customer Interruptions data for each of the DNOs for the last five reporting years.

Customer Interruptions—CIs

DNO	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Aquila (ex-Midlands)	132.24	120.82	139.69	147.77	123.54
EME (ex-East Midlands)	93.10	76.47	77.80	91.38	78.82
EPN (ex-Eastern)	73.71	60.40	66.11	68.83	192.02
Hydro (Scottish Hydro)	153.10	155.00	141.20	131.61	124.71
LPN (ex-London)	39.18	36.89	36.19	39.75	38.62
NEDL (ex-Northern)	90.07	92.59	89.91	98.09	93.65
SP Distribution (ex-Scottish Power)	72.95	85.75	82.24	91.52	76.27
SPN (ex-Seeboard)	91.00	95.50	89.90	88.50	93.29
Southern	72.73	63.97	74.37	73.78	103.17
SP Manweb	57.33	44.13	53.08	53.01	51.60
UU (ex-Norweb)	83.80	57.60	54.10	54.10	56.46
WPD S. Wales (ex-Swalec)	185.70	150.20	152.70	158.20	120.73
WPD S. West (ex-Sweb)	105.50	80.10	90.40	86.50	107.06
YEDL (ex-Yorkshire)	80.00	71.79	73.03	69.80	78.79

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have been helped by each regional development agency; what the average sum of money received by these businesses is; how many of the businesses helped are still operating; and how many of these businesses have increased their profitability. [148189]

Jacqui Smith: England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) help businesses both directly and indirectly through a range of activities and programmes including skills development, upgrading infrastructure and improving business competitiveness of the region in general.

Information on how many businesses have been helped, the average sum of money received, how many are still operating, and how many have increased their profitability, is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The number of businesses added to the regional economy as a direct result of RDA activity is available for financial year 2002–03 and is broken down by Agency in the following table. The information is also available on the DTI website at http: //www. dti.gov.uk/rda/info/.

UK Investment

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action her Department has taken to stimulate UK investment in *(a)* Poland, *(b)* Lithuania and *(c)* Latvia. [150826]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: UK Trade and Investment does not stimulate outward investment to any market. The decision to invest is a commercial one and companies have to decide the best way of running their business. Where companies have made that decision they can ask UK Trade and Investment to provide advice and assistance to enable companies to invest successfully abroad, minimising the associated risks and maximising the benefit to companies and the UK economy.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what action her Department has taken to stimulate UK investment in *(a)* the Czech Republic and *(b)* Bulgaria; [150828]

(2) what action her Department has taken to stimulate UK investment in *(a)* Hungary and *(b)* Estonia; [150827]

(3) what action her Department has taken to stimulate UK investment in *(a)* Malta, *(b)* Turkey and *(c)* Romania; [150825]

(4) what action her Department has taken to stimulate UK investment in *(a)* Slovakia, *(b)* Slovenia and *(c)* Cyprus. [150824]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answers 26 January 2004]:* UK Trade and Investment does not stimulate outward investment to any market. The decision to invest is a commercial one and companies have to decide the best way of running their business. Where companies have made that decision they can ask UK Trade and Investment to provide advice and assistance to enable companies to invest successfully abroad, minimising the associated risks and maximising the benefit to companies and the UK economy.

World Trade Organisation

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which members of the World Trade Organisation have yet to *(a)* ratify and *(b)* implement the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Financial Services. [149079]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The WTO agreement on financial services dates from 12 December 1997 and required ratification and acceptance by 29 January 1999. To date, Brazil, Jamaica and Philippines have not done so.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many delegates from each member of the World Trade Organisation attended the ministerial conference in Cancun in September 2003. [149977]

Ms Hewitt: According to WTO Secretariat figures over 3,200 accredited delegates attended the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun held in September 2003, from 144 member country delegations.

The WTO Secretariat does not provide a breakdown of the number of delegates by member country. A list of all accredited delegates is available from the WTO website at: www.wto.org.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Aldicarb

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to discontinue the use of aldicarb on crops in the UK. [150520]

Alun Michael: Council Decision 2003/199/EC of 18 March 2003 requires member states to withdraw approvals for most uses of products containing aldicarb by 18 September 2004.

However, the Decision allows for certain 'essential uses' of aldicarb to continue until 31 December 2007. These are limited uses for which no efficient alternative control methods currently exist. In the UK the essential uses are for the control of nematodes (parasitic worms) on potatoes, carrots, parsnips, onions and ornamentals.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made by the Pesticide Safety Directorate of the effects on human health of pesticides containing aldicarb. [150521]

Alun Michael: The UK was the 'rapporteur member state' for aldicarb in the EC review of pesticides under Directive 91/414/EEC. The Pesticides Safety Directorate was thus responsible for examining extensive scientific data on aldicarb to draft an assessment report for review by all other member states and the EC Commission.

The EC review of aldicarb concluded that under normal conditions of use there would be no unacceptable risks to workers or consumers. However, the substance is being phased out due to potential environmental impacts.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice the Pesticide Safety Directorate has published on the handling of pesticides containing aldicarb. [150522]

Alun Michael: Advice on safe handling of pesticides is provided as 'safety precautions' on the labels and accompanying literature for pesticides. The safety precautions for each pesticide product are checked and agreed by the Pesticide Safety Directorate as part of the approval process.

Pesticides containing aldicarb carry over 20 safety precautions covering the following areas: operator protection (including details of specified protective clothing); consumer protection; environmental protection; and storage and disposal advice.

Animal Health Act

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's statutory responsibilities are under the Animal Health Act 1981 in respect of the elimination of contiguous reservoirs of disease which have zoonotic and animal health implications. [150577]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under section 29 of the Animal Health Act 1981, the Secretary of State may, with a view to reducing the risk to human health of any disease of, or organism carried in, animals, make an Order designating any such disease or organism which, in her opinion, constitutes such a risk.

Badgers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the project designed to assess the impact of removing badgers from the ecosystem will also take into account *(a)* the impact of allowing unrestrained growth of the badger population and *(b)* the impact of controlled reductions in badger populations to various levels. [150473]

Mr. Bradshaw: Even where culling does not take place the local badger population is not undergoing 'unrestrained growth' as it will be subject to limits imposed by natural and human phenomena. The project designed to assess the impact of removing badgers from the ecosystem will assess the impact on other wildlife of

controlled reductions in badger populations to various levels, in comparison with areas where badgers are not culled.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she reconciled the inability to estimate the effect of alternative capture methods of badgers which would remove 100 per cent. of the population with the findings during the Thornbury trial. [150490]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Krebs Report referred to the difficulty of assessing the effect of different control strategies on the prevalence of TB in badgers and on herd breakdowns. The report says

> "None of the control strategies have been assessed in a properly designed experiment to establish their efficacy." (Krebs Report pages 82–83).

A comparison of reactive culling areas of the Randomised Badger Culling trial (RBCT) and the Thornbury clearance area is not valid. Although indicative of the effect on cattle TB incidence that might be expected if a total badger clearance were achieved, the Thornbury badger removal was performed without contemporary control areas. This limits its usefulness as a basis for comparison with the impact of lesser percentage badger clearances achieved by other methods, since any change in the incidence of TB in cattle subsequent to culling could have resulted in whole or in part from some other cause.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 211W, what conclusions she draws from the data on the location of TB lesions in badgers as to the main route of infection; and whether it is possible to draw similar conclusions in respect of the data available on the location of TB lesions in cattle. [150491]

Mr. Bradshaw: Infection with *Mycobacterium bovis* most often causes lesions in the respiratory tract and the associated lymph nodes, which suggests that the most common route of infection in badgers and cattle is by inhalation, or ingestion followed by inhalation. In badgers infection by inoculation through bite wounds are also a relatively frequent route of infection.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the scientific rationale was for the choice of the different distance parameters adopted for the culling zones of badgers in *(a)* the Gassing Strategy and *(b)* the Clean Ring Strategy, of the Krebs trials. [150509]

Mr. Bradshaw: For the gassing strategy: where TB infection was found in badgers, an area of up to one kilometre from the farm boundary was surveyed, to include the full territories of badgers on the infected farm. Social groupings were identified and all infected social groups, and groups in contact with them, were gassed. The area gassed was determined by the location of infected farms, infected badgers, sett groupings and natural boundaries. (Krebs Report 1997, page 142)

For the Clean Ring strategy: infected social groups, and those contiguous with them were culled. Culling, of social groups that were contiguous to groups found to be infected, continued until a clean ring of social groups containing no infected animals was found and removed, or else there were no badgers found. (Krebs Report page 143)

The use of broadly circular treatment areas of 100 km^2 for the Randomised Badger Culling Trial is explained on pages 8–9 of the first report of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB and is based on the suggested use of 10km by 10km squares in the Krebs Report, pages 90–93.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what distances can be travelled by adult badgers from their setts to their food sources; and what the radii were of the Krebs *(a)* reactive and *(b)* proactive areas. [150512]

Mr. Bradshaw: Adult badgers can travel between a few metres and a few kilometres from their setts to their food sources dependent on the quality of the habitat. None of the Krebs reactive and proactive areas are completely circular, so no exact radii can be evaluated. Trial areas are initially described using a 5.64 km radius circle but this shape is distorted by natural features and survey data to end up with areas of around 100 sq km. However, details of the total surface areas of the Krebs reactive and proactive areas are available on the Defra Internet site.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 211W, on badgers, what proportion of badgers culled as part of TB control strategies conducted during 1979–97 tested positive for *M. bovis*; and what the percentage was in *(a)* 1975–82, *(b)* 1982–88 and *(c)* 1988–97. [150547]

Mr Bradshaw: The following table gives these data:

Period	*1979–97*	*1975–82*	*1982–88*	*1988–97*
Badgers culled	20,252	2,661	6,367	13,401
Badgers positive for *M. bovis*	3,985	283	966	3,118
Percentage	20.1	10.7	15.2	24.0

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 212W, what inferences can be drawn from the preponderance of TB lesions found in badgers on post mortem examination arising in the lymphatic nodes of head and chest as to *(a)* the portal of infection, *(b)* the possible routes of infection and *(c)* the risk presented by those badgers to other animals. [150564]

Mr. Bradshaw: Infection with *Mycobacterium bovis* frequently causes lesions in the respiratory tract and the associated lymph nodes of badgers, which suggests that a common route of infection is by inhalation, or ingestion followed by inhalation. Where there is infection of the respiratory tract, it is probable that there are phases of *M. bovis* excretion of infected saliva via the respiratory tract, which may contaminate pasture or animal feed containers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether material contaminated with the *M. bovis* bacilli deposited on grassland by badgers and subsequently entrained in hay

used for the feeding of cattle is considered to present a significant risk of infection to *(a)* cattle, *(b)* farmers and *(c)* other persons who may handle this material. [150570]

Mr. Bradshaw: As the organism *Mycobacterium bovis* prefers damp mild conditions it is unlikely to survive the hay making process. We consider that there is no significant risk of infection to cattle, farmers or other persons who may handle hay.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in how many Krebs reactive areas badger culling was commenced in May 2003; how many farms were involved in these areas; how many of those farms had had *(a)* one and *(b)* two 60-day tests after the clearance operations; and what the results were of those tests. [150579]

Mr. Bradshaw: The first reactive operation in Triplet I commenced in May 2003. Reactive operations in Triplets A, B and C had commenced prior to May 2003 and further operations occurred during May 2003 in these Triplets.

The number of infected cattle herds triggering reactive culling operations in May 2003 in Triplets I, A, B and C totalled 20. The number and testing details of premises over which these operations took place cannot be provided at proportionate cost.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what methods other than gassing are available for the culling of badgers; and what statutory restrictions apply to those alternatives. [150585]

Mr. Bradshaw: Gassing is not a legal method of killing badgers.

The badger is a fully protected species. It is an offence to kill (or attempt to kill) a badger by any method (Protection of Badgers Act 1992 s.1(1)).

Badgers are also listed under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it a specific offence to poison badgers (including by gassing) (s.11(2)(a)).

A person guilty of these offences is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for up to six months and/or a fine of up to £5,000.

Where killing is carried out under a licence issued by Defra, the technique employed will depend on the particular circumstances of the individual case, but will normally involve cage trapping and humane dispatch by shooting.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what changes there were in the protocol for badger trapping in the period 1975 to 1997; and what effect they had on the success rate of trapping operations. [150590]

Mr. Bradshaw: The key operational features of badger control strategies from 1975 to 1996 are set out in Appendix 3 to the Krebs Report. We have no validated data on the success rate of the various culling strategies.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 212W, on badgers, what her best estimate is of the typical kill rates of badgers during the Krebs culling programmes; what the worst rates were; and what the impact was of low kill rates on the *(a)* conduct and *(b)* outcome of the trials. [150592]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no precise way of measuring badger populations pre- and post-culling operations and estimates are made in the Randomised Badger Culling Trial based on field signs at a sample number of setts. Culling success is affected by a range of factors including levels of access, anti-trial activity and the time of the year, and where proactive culling in a triplet has been carried out at a sub-optimal time the next cull, where possible, is planned for more optimal periods.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what precautions can be taken by farmers to guarantee freedom from TB in cattle bought into herds; and to what extent she advises that they can rely on a test or other certification attesting to freedom from TB infection. [150495]

Mr. Bradshaw: There can be no guarantee of remaining free of bovine TB. However farmers are encouraged to take all practical disease prevention measures to reduce the risk of disease introduction when bringing in new stock, including arranging a tuberculin test of purchased cattle before they are brought into to the resident herd.

The Department provides advice in the form of a freely available booklet "TB in Cattle—Reducing the Risk". A concise list of disease prevention measures which was developed with livestock industry representatives and vets, was sent to all livestock farmers in 2002; it can be found on the Defra website.

The comparative tuberculin skin test is used to certify that cattle herds are free from bovine tuberculosis, the comparative skin test at the standard interpretation, provides sensitivity in the range 68 per cent. to 95 per cent. and specificity in the range in the range 96 per cent. to 99 per cent.

Clearly a negative test result on individual animals brought into a herd will not guarantee their freedom from disease, although it will substantially reduce the risk. A recent clear herd test result for the herd of origin will reduce the risk that imported animals have been exposed to infection still further.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the consultation on the new TB strategy will commence; and whether she expects that the detailed results and conclusions from the Krebs trials will be available prior to that consultation. [150497]

Mr. Bradshaw: We aim to publish a consultation document "Preparing for a new GB Strategy on bovine tuberculosis" in February. The document will represent the outcome of the first stage of the review announced by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at last year's NFU Annual General

Meeting. The consultation document will contain proposals for action in the short term including measures to prevent the geographical spread of the disease.

The Independent Scientific Group on cattle TB (ISG) anticipates that the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (or the 'Krebs Trial') operations will be complete by 2006. The ISG will report to Ministers thereafter.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what has been the total expenditure by her Department on investigating the pathogenesis and epidemiology of Bovine TB since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is over the next five years. [150498]

Mr. Bradshaw: Total expenditure since 1997 on research projects investigating the pathogenesis and epidemiology of Bovine TB is £17.3 million. Research already commissioned for 2004–5 onwards totals £5.6 million and consultations for research requirements to start from the financial year 05–06 have been initiated. Epidemiology and pathogenesis will continue to be important parts of the bovine TB research programme.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to compensate herd owners for uninsurable losses arising from the event of a TB herd breakdown. [150501]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government currently pays compensation to farmers for the market value of all cattle slaughtered under the TB control programme. There are no plans to compensate for consequential losses.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what inference she has drawn from the number of slaughterhouse cases of bovine TB as to the efficacy of the TB surveillance programme. [150503]

Mr. Bradshaw: The examination of carcases in the slaughterhouse complements surveillance through the periodic testing of cattle. Identification of infected carcases in slaughterhouses does not necessarily reflect a failure of the tuberculin test to detect the infection: given that infected cattle can develop grossly visible lesions within a relatively short time after infection with *Mycobacterium bovis*, it would be expected that some animals will become infected and be presented for slaughter in the intervals between herd tests, which can last up to four years. In recent years, the proportion of TB incidents that are detected in the slaughterhouse is lower in parishes where herds are tested more frequently, in other words frequent tuberculin testing reduces the risk that diseased cattle are disclosed during slaughterhouse inspection.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action is taken in respect of slaughterhouse cases of bovine TB to trace the animals back to the farm of origin; what proportion of these cases were traced back to source in the last five years; and how many herds identified as a result of such action were subsequently confirmed as TB breakdowns. [150504]

Mr. Bradshaw: All suspects detected in the slaughterhouse are traced back to the farm of origin, movement restrictions are imposed and the herd is check tested.

Material from animals with lesions detected at slaughter is submitted for laboratory confirmation of the presence of the causative organism, *Mycobacterium bovis*. Typically, about 35 per cent. to 50 per cent. of suspected cases of TB detected during routine meat inspection are eventually confirmed by culture of *M. bovis* in tissue samples, which automatically triggers a confirmed TB breakdown in the herd of origin whether or not reactors are found in the subsequent check test. Between 10 and 13 per cent. of all new TB breakdowns confirmed in a given year are started by a 'slaughterhouse case' and between 34 and 47 per cent. of such breakdowns will have reactors in the subsequent check test.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has identified a statistically significant correlation between the distribution of TB infection in badgers and the distribution of TB in cattle. [150505]

Mr. Bradshaw: The report from the Independent Scientific Review Group, chaired by Sir John Krebs, which reported in 1997, concluded that there was "strong evidence for an association between TB in cattle and badgers". This relationship will be investigated further using data collected in the Randomised Badger Culling Trial, which is currently underway.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs where slaughterhouse cases of bovine TB are identified as having originated in animals which have transited through livestock markets immediately prior to despatch for slaughter; what measures are taken in those markets to contain the spread of disease; and what action is taken to trace possible contact animals consequently confirmed as TB breakdowns. [150506]

Mr. Bradshaw: The transmission of the causative organism, *Mycobacterium bovis*, between cattle requires in most cases for the animals to be in close proximity with each other. While there is a risk that the organism could be transmitted between cattle at a market, conditions are such that this is a relatively low risk. Thus tracings of cattle that have come into contact with infected animals do not take into account contacts that take place in markets.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what herd TB breakdowns have been recorded in the last 10 years in areas *(a)* where there have been no badgers detected and *(b)* following complete clearance of badgers. [150511]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is insufficient reliable data on the extent and varying density of the badger population of Great Britain to identify, with any certainty, areas where there is an absence of badgers. No area, in the last 10 years, has been completely cleared of badgers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what causation models, or combinations thereof, are being used by her Department to determine the cause of bovine TB and

mechanisms of transmission; what the specific criteria are which make up the models; and which criteria remain to be satisfied before a firm association can be made between the presence of infection in the badger population and the presence of the disease in cattle. [150517]

Mr. Bradshaw: To help to determine the cause of bovine TB and mechanisms of transmission, the Department has investigated spatially explicit GIS-based stochastic simulation badger/TB models. The models are complex and are described in detail in a range of scientific publications available from the Central Science Laboratory. The Randomised Badger Culling Trial is seeking to address the question of the contribution of the presence of infection in badgers to the presence of the disease in cattle, and results will be available in due course.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs with regard to the TB control operation in Thornbury, what the level was of cattle TB in the trial area prior to the removal of badgers; how many times, by what methods, and how thoroughly the removal was effected; whether these operations led to an elimination of badgers; how soon after the completion of operations badgers re-colonised the area; and at what level the re-colonisation was noted. [150572]

Mr. Bradshaw: The incidence of herds with visible lesion reactors in the Thornbury intervention area, prior to badger clearance starting, was 74 in 1,314 herd years or 5.6 per cent. No reliable record exists of the number of gassing operations, but the Zuckerman Report refers to gassing starting in December 1975 and continuing to August 1976. Many setts were re-colonised immediately and "a considerable amount of re-gassing was necessary". The gas used in Thornbury was hydrogen cyanide and the badger activity was reduced to a "low level by 1979–80" (Zuckerman Report). The badger population at Thornbury took about 10 years to recover once action to prevent re-colonisation ceased.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs with regard to the TB control operation in Thornbury, for how long after the completion of operations cattle remained clear of TB, as assessed by use of cattle tuberculin tests. [150573]

Mr. Bradshaw: No confirmed cases of tuberculosis in cattle in the area of the Thornbury operation were disclosed by the tuberculin test in the 10-year period following the cessation of gassing.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 525W, when she expects to be able to release details of the content and funding of the future TB research programme, with specific reference to the funding of vaccine research. [150588]

Mr. Bradshaw: Future funding of the TB research programme, in common with all Government expenditure, will be considered as part of the 2004 Spending Review, which is under way and will be finalised later in the year.

Future TB research requirements, including those for vaccine research, will be announced in May or June with the publication of the Animal Health and Welfare Research Requirements Document (RRD). Details of bovine TB research work currently being funded by Defra can be found on the Defra website.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 216W, what criteria have to be satisfied by *(a)* farmers and *(b)* livestock hauliers in order to gain multiple pick-up approval; who is responsible for granting approval; and what costs are involved in granting approval. [150595]

Mr. Bradshaw: All multiple pick-ups and drop-offs must take place at premises that have prior approval from Defra to operate as a multiple pick-up/drop-off site. The conditions under which multiple pick-ups and drop-offs may take place are set out in Annex B of the General Licences for cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. These licences can be found on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/movements/documents/default.htm

Inspectors or local veterinary inspectors are at Defra's expense. An inspection is carried out to ensure that the requirements of the licences can be met. The inspection is carried out either by animal health officers, veterinary officers, temporary veterinary inspectors or local veterinary inspectors and is at Defra's expense.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what further estimate she has made of the increase in bovine TB following the discontinuance of reactive culling. [150625]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISO) has indicated that it will continue to analyse data from the treatment areas randomised as reactive areas as part of its regular interim analyses. The next such analysis, using data to March 2004, is expected to take place in April.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 523W, on badgers, how many individual clearance operations in the Krebs areas were specifically related to individual farms; how many such operations covered more than one farm; and what difference there was in the TB incidence in cattle on farms which were part of an operation covering more than one farm as compared with those which were subject to an operation covering only one farm. [150775]

Mr. Bradshaw: Management records indicate that 78 reactive operations were carried out under the Randomised Badger Culling Trial and these involved 172 notified, infected premises. Of these operations, 37 related to a single infected premise. The extent of TB incidence was not a factor considered when grouping geographically proximal breakdown premises for reactive culling operations.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Department's responses to Professor Zuckerman's recommendations on protecting badgers and cattle from TB. [150858]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department's responses to Professor Zuckerman's recommendations are summarised in Appendix 1 of Professor Dunnet's report to the Department in 1986 entitled "Badgers and Bovine Tuberculosis—Review of Policy". A copy of the report is available in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which of the *(a)* proactive and *(b)* reactive and *(c)* control areas of the Krebs trials underwent boundary changes after initial designation of the areas; and when these changes occurred. [150894]

Mr. Bradshaw: All trial areas were modified marginally to include or exclude whole farm premises following surveying and prior to initial proactive culling. On occasions, slight changes in treatment boundary have been agreed by the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB in response to changes observed in badger activity and social group organisation.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department have established a field scale experiment to model postulated modes of transmission of bovine TB between badgers and cattle to test hypotheses relating to the spread mechanisms of the disease using live or attenuated TB bacilli, or indicator organisms which mimic the behaviour of the TB bacilli. [150943]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has not established a trial of this nature. Epidemiological surveys are being undertaken which will provide information on risk factors associated with the occurrence of disease outbreaks.

British Beef Ban

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action the Government are taking to secure compensation for British farmers who suffered loss as a result of the action of the French Government in continuing to ban British beef following the breach of the European Court of Justice ruling of December 2001; and if she will make a statement. [151345]

Mr Bradshaw *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The Government cannot claim compensation because they have no direct commercial interest. Those parties who were directly affected by the illegal French ban must decide for themselves whether to seek such compensation for losses.

However we will provide information and practical assistance (although not financial support or detailed legal advice) to exporters who wish to pursue claims for compensation.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150283]

Alun Michael: Defra's total office space for its civil servants in central London is 63,045.35 square metres with an additional 98.41 square metres in outer London, giving a total for Greater London of 63,143.76 square metres.

Combustion Plants

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many states in the EU have applied for the National Plan option under the Large Combustion Plant Directive. [148754]

Mr. Morley: According to information provided by the European Commission, two other member states in addition to the UK: Ireland and Finland, have submitted a National Plan under the Directive.

Contractors

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what conclusions have been drawn by her Department on *(a)* commissioning the services of contractors during animal health emergencies and *(b)* the keeping and auditing of accounts; and what advice she will give to contractors who may be requested to supply goods or services to her Department in a future emergency. [150518]

Mr. Bradshaw: The conclusions that have been drawn by the Department on *(a)* commissioning the services of contractors during animal health emergencies and *(b)* the keeping and auditing of accounts are as follows:

The Department will deal with those contractors who meet its requirements for eligibility and economic and financial standing, together with the ability and technical capacity to deliver the goods, services and works required;

The Department will take all sufficient and necessary steps to prevent windows of commercial opportunity being opened up by contractors to taxpayers disbenefit during animal health or any other emergencies;

The Department requires its contractors to substantiate their charges and allow Defra to verify that the charges invoiced are fully in accordance with the contractual provisions.

Contractors who may be requested to supply goods, services or works to the Department in a future emergency will be asked, as is currently the case, to comply with the terms of the contracts agreed with them.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she intends to reply to the letter dated 28 October 2003 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan to the Minister for Farming, Food and Sustainable Energy, regarding his constituent, Mr. T. Curran of Portsoy. [149778]

Alun Michael: The hon. Member's letter of 28 October was addressed to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

The Department of Trade and Industry approached the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with a view to transferring the hon. Member's correspondence there. That Department then approached Defra.

The subject raised by the hon. Member is not a matter for this Department and therefore a transfer did not take place. The hon. Member may wish to raise this issue with the Department to whom he originally wrote.

Dairy Farming

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to meet representatives of supermarkets to discuss United Kingdom dairy farming. [149938]

Alun Michael: The Secretary of State has had no formal meetings with representatives of supermarkets to discuss milk prices. However, retailers are represented on the Dairy Supply Chain Forum chaired by my noble Friend Lord Whitty, which has been looking at collaborative solutions to improve supply chain efficiency, as well as other issues. Retailers are also represented in the Dairy Supply Chain Forum's Industry Development's Cap Reform Sub-Groups which aim to facilitate the long term sustainable development of the dairy supply chain and help it adjust to the new environment created by the reformed CAP.

Effluent Dumping

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to prevent farmers from dumping effluent in rivers. [148830]

Mr. Morley: The dumping of effluent in rivers is an offence under the Water Resources Act (WRA) 1991. The Environment Agency (the Agency) is responsible for regulating discharges of effluent to watercourses and issues discharge consents under Schedule 10 of the WRA. In all cases, consents are subject to strict conditions to ensure protection of the receiving water.

It is rare for a consent to be issued to a discharge of farm effluent because of the difficulty of achieving the standards necessary to protect the watercourse. It is accepted practice that slurry, manure and dirty water from farm buildings is contained and usually applied to land in accordance with the relevant sections of Defra's Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water.

The Control of Pollution (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) Regulations 1991 (and as amended in 1997) specify the size, design and construction standards that must be used for structures built since 1991 and used for storage of these specified materials. These Regulations also provide powers for the Agency to serve a notice, requiring action to avoid pollution, on a storage structure of any age where the Agency considers there is a serious risk of pollution.

In addition, both Defra and the Agency publish a wide range of relevant advisory literature which is available to farmers.

Environmental Taxation

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 255–56W, on environmental taxation, if she will break down into component parts the 2.85 per cent. UK figure. [150114]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The OECD breakdown of UK environmental taxation into its component parts for the year 2001 is given in the table herewith.

OECD breakdown by tax of UK environmental taxation for 2001

Name of tax	*£ million*
Duty on hydrocarbon oils	22,046.0
Leaded petrol	3.1
Unleaded petrol	1,979.5
Ultra low sulphur petrol	11,042.2
Diesel	59.8
Ultra low sulphur diesel	8,754.2
Non-fossil fuel obligation levy	86.0
Vehicle excise duty	4,061.0
Air passenger duty	824.0
Landfill tax	505.0
Climate Change Levy	588.0
Gas regulator fees	13.0
Electricity regulator fees	14.0
Water regulator fees	13.0
Fees paid to the Environment Agency	190.0
Total	28,340.0

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions in the UK were brought against fishermen in each of the last 10 years for landing black fish; and how many fishermen were convicted. [150239]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information in the form requested is not readily available. However information extracted from returns on serious fisheries infringements in the United Kingdom submitted to the European Commission since 2000 in response Council Regulation (EC) No 1447/1999 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 2740/1999 shows that the number of infringements involving the falsification of logbooks, landing declarations and sales notes, for which prosecutions were completed and with which black fish landings are associated, were:

Black fish landings

	Number
2000	31
2001	55
2002	78

Most of the infringements for which prosecutions were taken resulted in a successful conviction.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate her Department has made of changes in the tonnage of black fish landed by the United Kingdom registered fishing fleet in *(a)* home and *(b)* foreign ports in the last five years; and what her estimate is of the tonnage of black fish landed in the last year. [150243]

Mr. Bradshaw: No estimates have been produced by the Department of the overall levels of illegal landings for the 100 or so fish stocks for which the UK has quota.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial contributions her Department made in the last five financial years to fisheries research *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* commissioned by the European Union; and what the projects were. [150244]

Mr. Bradshaw: Details of the level of Defra financial contribution to EU fisheries research projects, and the project titles, active between 1999–2000 and 2003–04 is given in the following table.

DEFRA contributions to EU fisheries projects between 1999–2000 and 2003–04

£

Title	*DEFRA funded*
EC FAIR Programme: A calibration of different molecular markers for use in the discrimination and management of stocks of commercially Important Species C0135 EC 95/0282	120,240
EC FAIR Programme, 1996: European fish aging network—Efan C0300 EC FAIR CT 96 1304	9,829
EC FAIR Programme 1997: diachronic changes in growth rate of North Sea fish species in relation to anthropogenic activities and climate changes C0418 EC FAIR CT 97 3462	44,150
EC STUDIES: evaluation and development of spatio-temporal models and survey designs for efficient assessment of mackerel and horse-mackerel C0532 EC 97/0097	5,974
EC STUDIES: monitoring fish and epibenthic biodiversity in the north sea and Skagerrak C0738 EC 98/02	139,550
EC STUDIES: monitoring discarding and retention on fishing vessels towing demersal gears in the North Sea and Skagerrak C0739 EC 98/097	116,807
EC STUDIES: evaluation of market sampling for a number of commercially exploited fish stocks in the North Sea C0768 EC 98/075	62,928
EC STUDIES: optimisation of the design of a summer trawl research vessel study for north sea stock C0769 EC 98/029	19,267
EC STUDIES: development of stock assessment methodologies egg production estimates of Irish Sea demersal stocks C0798 EC 98/090	268,967
EC FAIR: shelf-edge advection, mortality and recruitment (SEAMAR) C0938 FAIR CT98–3695	2,250
EC STUDIES framework to improve the assessment of demersal and pelagic fisheries in western European waters FIEFA 2 C0950	76,341
EC STUDIES alternative uses of data from satellite monitoring of fishing vessel activity in fisheries management C0955	52,792
EC STUDIES development of elasmobranch assessments C0963	24,375
EC STUDIES collection and evaluation of assessment data for key European edible crab stocks C0981	57,618
EC FPV development of structurally detailed statistically testable models of marine populations (DST) C0982	152,401
EC FPV combining geostatistical and Bayesian methods to improve the scientific basis for the management of Atlantic mackerel fisheries C0989	422,787
EC FPV European decapod crustacean fisheries: assessment and management (EDFAM) C1047	11,058
EC FPV determination of the linkage between hydrographical frontal activity and ecosystem dynamics in the North Sea and Skagerrak LIFECO C1080 X5RS-2000–30183	398,483
EC STUDIES mackerel triennial egg survey WGMEGS C1237 00/038	153,448
EC FPV combining acoustic and trawl data for estimating fish abundance CATEFA C1251 QLRT-2000–02038	125,914
Comparative behavioural dynamics of cod in European waters (CODYSSEY) C1451 QLRT-2001–00813	445,748
Integrated approach to the biological basis of age estimation in commercially important fish species (IBACS) C1473QLRT-2001–01610	93,021
Reproductive potential of cod and hake in relation to recovery plans RASER C1492QLRT-2001–01825	130,066
Framework for the evaluation of management strategies (FEMS) C1502QLRT-2001–01824	95,685
Technological developments and tactical adaptions of important EU fleets (TECTAC) C1522QLRT-2001–01291	99,259
Policy knowledge in fisheries management—the North Sea cod case (PKFM) C1528QLRT-2001–01782	36,792

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what representations she has received from *(a)* fishermen and *(b)* their representatives on the (i) application and (ii) utility of selective gear in reducing cod by-catch in haddock fisheries; [150251]

(2) what consultations her Department had with British fishing industry representatives about linking the increase in the haddock quota with spatial management; [150300]

(3) when she was first informed of the Commission's proposal to link spatial management with the increase in the British haddock quota; [150301]

(4) how much time was spent at the December Fisheries Council discussing options for increasing the haddock quota for Scottish boats in International Council for the Exploration of the Seas areas IVa and IVb without resorting to the principle of spatial management; [150302]

(5) what proposals she and her officials put to the *(a)* Council of Ministers and *(b)* Commission in or before December 2003 with the aim of enabling Scottish fishermen to maximise opportunities to catch European haddock. [150856]

Mr. Bradshaw: Representations from the industry indicated, variously, a preference for some kind of spatial management. Technical conservation methods (such as selective gear) were also advocated by some as an option to be considered in parallel with spatial management as they are developed.

At the December Fisheries Council all the options to enable responsible exploitation of the North sea haddock stock were considered at some length, but the solution agreed was developed from the spatial management proposed by the industry. In order to secure additional quota for the UK, we negotiated the special licensing system to ensure protection of the cod stock.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of cod sold in the British retail market is caught by British registered boats. [150303]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information available on landings of and trade in cod in 2002 indicates that landings by UK registered vessels accounted for 15 per cent. of total cod consumed in the UK during the year. However, most of the cod imported into the UK has been processed to some extent. As such on a standardised live weight equivalent basis, the landings by UK registered vessels accounted for 5 per cent. of total cod consumed in the UK in 2002.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment has been made of the economic impact of including steaming time in the days at sea allowance on the fishing ports of north east England; [150318]

(2) what the reason is for including steaming time in the days at sea allowance. [150325]

Mr. Bradshaw: The time at sea limits in 2003 provided for a separate allowance of days for steaming to and from the fishing grounds, for vessels using gear of over 100 mm mesh. No separate allowance exists for 2004, because the calculation of days at sea for 2004 takes account of the fleet's time at sea in the base period, including its steaming time.

The permitted number of days for the vessels using over 100 mm mesh gear is 15 per month for 2004, the same total as in 2003.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what limitations have been placed on the locations in which the *(a)* monkfish and *(b)* megrim quota awarded to the Scottish fleet can be caught in International Council for the Exploration of the Seas areas IVa and IVb. [150321]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such limitations apply specifically to the monkfish or megrim quotas set for the management area comprising International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) areas lla (EC waters) and IV (EC waters).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the reason is for excluding pelagic boats from the cod exclusion zone in International Council for the Exploration of the Seas area VIa. [150326]

Mr. Bradshaw: No scientific reason was adduced for this. The Commission has now acknowledged that the provision is more restrictive than is necessary to protect cod, and is working on revised wording.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the approximate landed fish values of the quotas of *(a)* cod, *(b)* haddock, *(c)* monkfish and *(d)* megrim, awarded to the Scottish fishing fleet in International Council for the Exploration of the Seas areas IVa and IVb were for this year. [150327]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible to estimate in advance the value of quota. Fish quota, held in the form of Fixed Quota Allocation Units, has no intrinsic value. Any value placed on uncaught quota used in quota transfers will depend on market conditions and each parties assessment of its value. The table shows the value at first point of sale of fish landed by the Scottish fleet from ICES areas IVa and IVb in the most recent year for which complete figures are available. It gives an indication of the value realised by landings of these quota species.

Value of fish landed by the Scottish fleet 2002

£000

	Area of capture	
Landed fish	*IVa*	*IVb*
Monkfish	17,379	469
Cod	20,109	1,309
Haddock	20,114	4,804
Megrim	2,774	2

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what factors affect the *(a)* seaworthiness and *(b)* ability to trawl in adverse weather conditions of fishing vessels; what effect these factors have on the ability of vessels to exploit fully allocations of days at sea. [150479]

Mr. Bradshaw: The seaworthiness of fishing vessels, and their ability to trawl in adverse weather, depend on various factors, including their design and construction, the standard of maintenance, and the standard of operation of the vessels. It is the responsibility of the skipper to determine when it is safe to fish.

In any year fishing operations will be curtailed from time to time by adverse weather. The calculation of permitted days at sea for 2004 takes account of the time spent at sea in the base period, including when fishing was constrained by bad weather. It thus incorporates time for when fishing is not safe.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the implications of the use of days at sea restrictions on regulating fishing effort. [150916]

Mr. Bradshaw: Limits on time at sea applied in 2003 in the North sea and West of Scotland, to help conserve cod stocks. On the basis of experience with this measure the European Commission and the member states concluded that limits on time at sea should be continued in order to reduce fishing effort as part of a cod recovery plan. Experience in administering the various elements of controls in 2003 informed decisions by the Council of Ministers on the details of successor arrangements for 2004. The Government's objective in negotiations on the 2004 arrangements took account of the views of the fishing industry on the 2003 measures.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will investigate the *(a)* adequacy of the grounds and *(b)* quality of decision-making in her Department in pursuing prosecutions of contractors for alleged fraudulent claims or other irregularities relating to the claims made for the work undertaken for or on behalf of her Department in respect of foot and mouth disease. [150561]

Mr. Bradshaw: The prosecution of contractors for alleged fraudulent claims is a criminal matter. In such cases, Defra would refer the matter to the appropriate authorities tasked with deciding whether to prosecute or not.

On the civil side, claims are initiated on the advice of Defra's lawyers. In the commercial disputes pertaining to the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 this advice has been provided by external commercial law firms in conjunction with forensic accountants and quantity surveyors after detailed review of contractor accounts. In many cases Defra has been successful in resolving disputes through negotiation and/or alternative disputes resolution procedures. Other disputes are being pursued through the Courts.

Defra has a public law duty to protect the public purse. It will do so unfailingly in all circumstances where the evidence is sufficient to meet legal requirements in either a civil or criminal context.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total payments made to date to contractors in respect of works commissioned by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* its predecessor, carried out in relation to the foot and mouth epidemic of 2001 are. [150563]

Mr. Bradshaw: Total payments of £1,247 million have been made to date to contractors in respect of works commissioned by the Department carried out in relation to the foot and mouth epidemic in 2001.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations have been made to her Department concerning the intimidation of contractors and their representatives by officials of her Department in pursuit of reducing or discounting the value of invoices or claims made by them in respect of services provided to her Department in relation to the 2001 foot and mouth epidemic. [150566]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Small Business Group has drawn the Department's attention to one case where a contractor has alleged intimidating and inappropriate communications from Defra.

To date, Defra has not received any evidence in support of the allegation that intimidation of contractors and their representatives has taken place.

Any such representations would be considered on their merits having regard to the motives of those persons making such representations.

Genetic Modification

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will define the terms "very low" and "unlikely" as used in the GM Science Review in July 2003. [148904]

Mr. Morley: I take the terms "very low" and "unlikely" as used by the GM Science Review Panel to indicate sequences of events or risks that, while theoretically possible, do not occur with sufficient probability to be cause for concern. The precise level of probability associated with these terms with vary on a case-by-case basis, depending on the particular issue that is being discussed.

Lead Content

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 737W, on lead content, what studies she has commissioned concerning lead in glass crystal; and if she will make a statement. [149453]

Mr. Morley: The Department has commissioned no studies concerning lead in glass crystal.

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost to her Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148032]

Alun Michael: Defra was formed in June 2001. The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Municipal Waste

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to ensure that local authorities continue to recycle municipal waste after 2005–06 when statutory responsibility ends; and if she will make a statement. [148755]

Mr. Morley: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 740W. As that answer explained, this year's review of national recycling targets will include consideration of whether to set further statutory recycling targets for local authorities for the years beyond 2005–06. Although I cannot prejudge the outcome of that review, the Government's goal will remain to encourage local authorities to continue to move management of municipal waste up the waste hierarchy in order to meet their obligations under the Landfill Directive.

Pesticides

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what criteria the Government use to assess the progress of the voluntary initiative on pesticides; [150958]

(2) what progress has been made with the voluntary initiative on pesticides; and how many hectares of land are now covered by the Crop Protection Management Plan. [150959]

Alun Michael: The Government have charged the signatories to the Voluntary Initiative on pesticides with reducing the environmental impact of pesticide use and, in particular, effects on biodiversity and contamination of water. These environmental outcomes will be the ultimate measure of success for the Initiative.

However, measuring environmental outcomes is difficult because they are slow to emerge, hard to measure and hard to attribute reliably to a particular cause. Because of these difficulties, the Government also assesses progress with the Initiative in terms of uptake by farmers of the key components of the Initiative. Of

these, the most significant are the National Register of Sprayer Operators, the National Sprayer Testing Scheme and Crop Protection Management Plans.

To help test whether delivery of the Initiative will benefit the environment, the signatories are establishing an "Indicator Farms" project to examine the consequences of applying Initiative measures at a farm level. If the results of this project are positive, it will help provide assurance that national uptake of the Initiative could generate national environmental benefits.

Overall progress to date with the Initiative is encouraging. Uptake of Crop Protection Management Plans is ahead of schedule and, after a slow start, applications for the National Register of Sprayer Operators and National Sprayer Testing Scheme have accelerated with the backing of the crop assurance schemes. The Government will look to see this progress maintained and will also look for the most rapid possible progress with environmental outcomes. In particular, the Government will be monitoring the pilot water catchments and the Indicator Farms project.

The Crop Protection Association advise that, as of the week commencing 19 January, around 365,000 hectares were covered by Crop Protection Management Plans.

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) her Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147908]

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in her Department in the last 12 months. [150888]

Alun Michael: During 2003 available figures for the core Department show that 108 passes were reported lost and 12 stolen. These passes are electronically programmed and give no indication of the Department to which they relate. Once a loss is reported the pass is cancelled immediately which ends any threat to security.

Figures for Defra Agencies are as follows:

	Lost	*Stolen*
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science	16	1
Central Science Laboratory	11	0
Veterinary Laboratories Agency	6	0
Veterinary Medicines Directorate	10	0
Rural Payments Agency	350	5
Pesticides Safety Directorate	1	0

The high figure for the Rural Payments Agency is a result of employees on short term contracts failing to return their passes when they leave. This is being addressed.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to her Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149330]

Alun Michael: Defra actively promotes the better regulation agenda and the use of sunsetting where appropriate. The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) guidance 'Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment' advises policy officials to consider sunsetting at an early stage of policy development and gives specific circumstances where sunsetting may be appropriate. Additional examples are included in the web-based version of the RIA guidance published in November 2003. No acts containing sunset clauses relevant to Defra have been passed since Defra was established in 2001.

Underground Fuel Tanks

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many leakages from underground fuel tanks were reported to the Environment Agency in the last five years. [150051]

Mr. Morley: Information from the Environment Agency's database for these years will take a little time to compile but will be made available to the Library of the House as soon as possible. I will write to the hon. Member when that is, and I will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

HEALTH

Dentists

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* principal and *(b)* assistant dentists there were in (i) England, (ii) each NHS region and (iii) each strategic health authority who (A) offered NHS treatment and (B) had vacancies for NHS patients, in each of the last five years. [146218]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[pursuant to her reply, 14 January 2004, Official Report, c. 800W]:* I regret that the strategic health authority figures for general dentist service dentists for 2003 in table 1 of my previous response, separately for principal dentists and dental assistants were incorrect, and should have read as follows.

Table 1: Number of general dental service dentists in England by region and strategic health authority for September 1999 to 2003

	2003 Principal Dentists	*2003 Assistant Dentists*
England	16,649	1,312
Region		
Northern and Yorkshire	—	—
Trent	—	—
West Midlands	—	—
North West	—	—
Eastern	—	—
London	—	—
South East	—	—
South and West	—	—

Table 1: Number of general dental service dentists in England by region and strategic health authority for September 1999 to 2003

	2003 Principal Dentists	2003 Assistant Dentists
Strategic Health Authority		
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	786	58
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	602	62
Birmingham and The Black Country	663	50
Cheshire and Merseyside	779	36
County Durham and Tees Valley	346	8
Coventry, Warks, Herefordshire and Worcs.	489	31
Cumbria and Lancashire	601	23
Dorset and Somerset	418	38
Essex	462	57
Greater Manchester	852	37
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	567	77
Kent and Medway	507	63
Leics, Northants and Rutland	424	17
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	658	119
North and East Yorkshire and N. Lincs	499	18
North Central London	561	36
North East London	438	54
North West London	787	82
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	469	13
Shropshire and Staffordshire	430	13
South East London	525	44
South West London	534	50
South West Peninsula	555	47
South Yorkshire	405	20
Surrey and Sussex	1,084	87
Thames Valley	795	78
Trent	724	69
West Yorkshire	689	25

Note:
Assistant dentist numbers do not include VDPs (vocational dental practitioners).

Food in Schools Programme

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Food in Schools programme announced by his Department on 30 December 2003 is linked to the Food in Schools programme announced by his Department in April 2001; and what the differences are between the programmes announced on those dates. [147928]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In 2001 the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills announced a joint venture on Food in Schools. My announcement on the 5 January 2004 was to publicise the eight new regional projects being piloted in each English region to encourage healthy eating among children throughout the school day which are the Department of Health's strand of the Food in Schools Programme.

The Department for Education and Skills strand of the Food in Schools Programme comprises eight curriculum focused projects which cover teacher training and professional development, as well as development of guidelines, resources and curriculum materials.

Hospital Admissions

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will investigate the delay in admitting Mrs. H. Potter of Warrington to Wrightington Hospital; and if he will make a statement. [144879]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 18 December 2003]:* The strategic health authorities lead the strategic development of local health services and performance manage primary care trusts and National Health Service trusts on the basis of local accountability agreements, following the "Shifting the Balance of Power" initiative.

Unfortunately, to disclose information without the specific consent of the individual patient would breech patient confidentiality. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the Wrightington hospital.

Hospital-acquired Infection

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether published figures for deaths from hospital acquired infection are approximate; what the margin of error is for these figures; and what measures have been taken to improve the data. [147506]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The widely quoted figure of 5,000 deaths being caused by hospital acquired infections (HAIs) is an extrapolation from estimates of deaths due to all HAIs in the United States in the 1980s[1]. Although it is difficult to compare data from different health systems, if rates in the United States were applicable to the United Kingdom then 5,000 deaths might be primarily attributable to health acquired infections.

Better UK estimates cannot be produced as there are no centrally held statistics on deaths caused by hospital acquired infections.

[1] Haley et al (1985) The efficacy of infection surveillance and central programs in preventing nosocomial infections in US hospitals (SENIC). Amercican Journal of Epidemiology 121: 182–205

Residential Care

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provisions he has made to ensure that funding of independent residential care providers encourages them to supply expected increases in demands on their services from 2005 onwards. [149826]

Dr. Ladyman: There have been substantial increases in the level of funding provided for social services in recent years and it will continue to increase in the period to 2005–06. Councils can use these extra resources to increase local service provision taking into account the needs of the local population and the local supply of services.

We know that the majority of older people do not want to be in a care home and we are responding to this by investing in new models of provision such as extra-care housing schemes. It seems likely that the number of older people requiring residential care will not rise as fast as demographic pressures alone would suggest.

Scanners

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the normal life expectancy in the NHS is of *(a)* MRI, *(b)* CAT and *(c)* PET scanners. [145055]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The expected life of computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and positron emission tomography (PET) scanners is approximately seven to ten years, dependent on the level of upgrade that is possible for that equipment during its lifetime. However, it is not unreasonable for equipment to remain in-situ and in working order after this period.

Sexual Health

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in England were treated for a sexually transmitted disease in the most recent year for which figures are available. [150363]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There were 596,728 episodes of diagnosed or suspected sexually transmitted infections from genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics in England that were treated during the calendar year 2002. Additionally, there were 112,447 attendances at GUM clinics in England during 2002, where other conditions required treatment.

The quarterly statutory returns (KC60), made to Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (CDSC) from GUM clinics, record confirmed episodes of disease, rather than the number of people attending. Individuals may attend more than one GUM clinic and may attend more than once over the course of a calendar year.

Waiting Times

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list each NHS trust which maintains planned lists on which people wait for operations but which are excluded from the inpatient and outpatient waiting list returns; what his Department's guidance is about the use of planned waiting lists; and if he will make a statement; [150538]

(2) how many people are waiting for cataract operations on *(a)* waiting lists and *(b)* planned lists in each English health trust for the latest date for which information is available; and if he will make a statement. [150540]

Mr. Hutton: Data are not collected on the number of patients currently waiting on planned lists.

The use of planned lists has been an established practice for over 10 years. The Department has issued guidance to National Health Service trusts within the central return KH07 on recording patients waiting on planned lists. It states:

> Planned Admissions are those who have been given a date, or an approximate date, for admissions, usually as a planned sequence of clinical care. The date of admission for such patients is determined mainly on social or clinical grounds.

In light of this guidance, it is likely that all trusts submitting waiting lists maintain planned lists for those patients requiring a planned sequence of clinical care.

Data are not collected on the number of patients currently waiting for cataract surgery. However, data are collected on the number of patients on inpatient waiting lists within the specialty of ophthalmology.

At quarter two, 2003–04, ending 30 September 2003, there were 130,060 patients on the inpatient waiting list for ophthalmology. Data are not collected on individual procedures within each specialty. Data for earlier quarters can be viewed on the Department's website at: www.doh.gov.uk/waitingtimes. The national cataract initiative has been introduced to reduce waiting times for cataract operations to three months by December 2004.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children's Centres

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children's centres are planned to open in 2004; and if he will make a statement. [148427]

Margaret Hodge: There are now 61 children's centres in England, all of which are based in disadvantaged areas. Local authorities' strategic proposals are currently being assessed and more children's centres that meet the children's centre core offer have been identified. These will be announced in the next few weeks.

We are currently unable to state how many children's centres will open in 2004 but the exact position will be clearer once local authorities have submitted their implementation plans by the end of May 2004.

Children's Fund

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on changes in the Children's Fund budget made after the mid-year review; and what assessment he has made of the effects of the changes. [148914]

Margaret Hodge: The 2003–04 mid year review of expenditure identified approximately £12.5 million in underspend from quarters 1 and 2.

The Department met representatives from the main voluntary sector organisations involved in the Fund, the LGA and the ADSS on 18 December to discuss the review and assess its impact. Officials then wrote to all Children's Fund partnerships on 19 December 2003. We advised partnerships that where our decision to take back underspends at the mid-year review had compromised their ability to meet contractual obligations, we would revisit them. Furthermore, we set aside some money to assist where there was a likelihood of staff redundancy or premature closure of services. The Children's Fund regional teams have continued to discuss the detailed implications with partnerships and this process will be completed at the end of January.

Disabled Children

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment has been made of *(a)* disabled children's experience of abuse and *(b)* the effectiveness of existing systems in protecting disabled children; [150130]

(2) if he will develop a national strategy for the safeguarding of disabled children through consultation with disabled children and adults and organisations advocating on their behalf. [150131]

Margaret Hodge: The Department for Education and Skills regularly receives correspondence from parents and voluntary groups about issues affecting disabled children including child protection. This has included reports from the NSPCC, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and the National Working Group on Child Protection and Disability, which have influenced policy development. In particular, recent representations from the NSPCC were taken into account by the Disabled

Children's External Working Group developing standards as part of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services which will be published later this year. We welcome the publication of the recent report from the National Working Group, "It doesn't happen to disabled children: child protection and disabled children", and will consider its recommendations when developing Government policy and guidance on child protection.

The Joint Chief Inspectors' Report "Safeguarding Children", published in October 2002, contained a recommendation that all relevant Inspectorates should ensure that, prior to the next report, appropriate inspection activity had been undertaken on children with disabilities. "Safeguarding Children" asked Chief Inspectors to consider whether there was a need to supplement the planned programme of inspections in any way. In planning for the next children's safeguards review, the Inspectorates have identified that additional activity is required in relation to children with disabilities and special needs and are developing plans to enhance their programmes in this area.

Divorce

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in the East Midlands were affected by divorce in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03. [150923]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

The only figures collected centrally relate to the number of children involved at the petition stage of divorce. The total number of children of couples who petitioned for divorce in the East Midlands region in the given periods are:

	Petitions	*Children involved*
2001–02	12,467	7,537
2002–03	12,991	7,707

Further Education

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the level of funding per pupil in further education in *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Lancashire in 2003–04. [151278]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not collect information on the level of funding per pupil in further education at local or regional level. Mark Haysom, the Learning and Skills Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Gentleman with details of the average level of funding per pupil in further education in *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Lancashire in 2003–04. A copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* the national average level of funding per further education student and *(b)* the level of funding per student for each further education college is in Shrewsbury and Atcham. [151374]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not collect information on the level of funding per pupil in further education at local or regional level. Mark Haysom, the Learning and Skills Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Gentleman with details of the average level of funding per student for each further education college in Shrewsbury and Atcham. A copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library. Participation funding per full-time equivalent student in further education in England in 2003–04 is planned to be £3,830. This figure does not include funding for capital or funding for other specific initiatives. This figure is consistent with that published in the "Departmental Annual Report 2003".

Higher Education

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the average cost to a student of the decision to undertake higher education, taking into account *(a)* loss of potential earnings while a full time student and *(b)* all other costs associated with the decision. [147600]

Alan Johnson: My officials have estimated that the average net present cost[1] of participating in a three-year HE course, starting in 2001–02, is around £29,000 (in 2001 prices). The figure includes:

(a) direct costs—i.e. contribution towards tuition fees (net of fee remission paid by Government), maintenance support from the family, and Government student loan repayments—of around £12,000 and

(b) indirect costs—i.e. foregone earnings whilst in HE net of earnings whilst studying of around £17,000.

In undiscounted cash terms, the direct and indirect average costs are around £13,600 and £18,000 respectively. The estimate is based on a hypothetical average individual entering HE at the age of 18, and the costs are averaged across all students.

[1] Discounted at 3.5 per cent.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the proportion of people in Liverpool who have received higher education in each of the last 10 years. [150151]

Alan Johnson: The latest available information is shown in the table. Figures for earlier years are not held centrally.

Proportion of 18-year-olds from Liverpool local education authority who were accepted for entry to full-time undergraduate courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Year of entry	*Proportion*
1994	12.7
1995	14.7
1996	13.4
1997	13.9
1998	14.0
1999	15.9
2000	16.3
2001	17.5
2002	18.2

Mature Students

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to modify the age cap on loans for mature students following his decision to introduce a 25 year cut-off period for student loans. [151113]

Alan Johnson: The age limit is 50 for eligible students meeting the residence requirements. Those aged 50 to 54 at the start of their course can also apply for a student loan provided that they plan to return to work after finishing their course. We have no plans to change these age limits for mature students.

Outstanding loans for mature students are already cancelled when a borrower reaches the age of 65, and we have no plans to change that age limit. Putting a 25-year cap on the loan repayment period allows outstanding loan amounts to be written off after 25 years or age 65, whichever is the earlier.

Modern Apprenticeships

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the level of employer engagement with the modern apprenticeship scheme. [150003]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: "The Learning and Training at Work 2002" survey reveals that 10 per cent. of all employers of 16 to 24 year olds employ Foundation Modern Apprenticeships (FMA) and 4 per cent. employ Advanced Modern Apprenticeships (AMA). Larger employers are much more likely to employ modern apprentices than small firms: of all employers with over 500 staff who employ 16 to 24 year olds, 29 per cent. employ FMAs and 24 per cent. employ AMAs.

In 2002, 57 per cent. of employers were aware of AMAs (compared to 51 per cent. in 2001). Meanwhile, 45 per cent. of employers were aware of FMAs (compared to 39 per cent. in 2001).

The latest survey of MA employers reveals that, in 89 per cent. of cases, employers are very satisfied with the MA programme. Moreover, the majority of current employers (representing 91 per cent. of MAs) say they intend to continue offering MAs in the future.

National Botanic Gardens of Wales

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with Welsh Assembly Government colleagues with regard to funding for the National Botanic Gardens of Wales. [150665]

Mr. Hain: I have been asked to reply.

I have regular discussions with Assembly Ministers about issues affecting Wales, these have included the National Botanical Gardens. It is a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government to determine funding priorities in Wales.

Student Loans

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to raise the threshold at which existing graduates start repaying student loans. [151469]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* We plan to increase the threshold for the repayment of student loans from £10,000 to £15,000 with effect from April 2005. The increase in the threshold to £15,000 will apply to all borrowers regardless of when they took our their income contingent student loan.

Top-up Fees

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the effect of tuition fees on the number of doctors choosing to work abroad after qualification. [151120]

Alan Johnson: There is no reason to expect a significant effect. The Government have no evidence that there is a problem of more doctors leaving the UK permanently to work overseas. Doctors earn considerably in excess of the national average. So medical graduates will be able to pay off their student loan for living costs and for tuition fees comparatively rapidly.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Bribery

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General how many times since 1997 the Crown Prosecution Service has given advice to law enforcement agencies on whether an investigation into an offence of bribery of a foreign public official would have a realistic prospect of prosecution; and in how many of those instances its advice was that there would not be a realistic prospect of prosecution. [151440]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) does not keep records of the nationality of persons who are the subject of police investigations and about whom their advice is sought. In order to obtain this information all relevant files will have to be identified across the 42 Areas and individually checked. The information could not be obtained except at disproportionate costs. But even this would not necessarily provide comprehensive data as a number of relevant older files may well have been destroyed in accordance with archiving procedures.

Outsourcing

Norman Lamb: To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the Department's procurement policy with regard to offshore IT and call centre outsourcing; whether the Department is outsourcing IT and call centre jobs to offshore companies; to which countries the Department has outsourced these jobs; how much the Department has spent on this outsourcing in each of the last two years; and how much has been budgeted for this purpose for the next two years. [147576]

The Solicitor-General: None of the Departments for which the Attorney General holds Ministerial responsibility currently outsource either call centre or IT services to offshore companies and have no current plans to do so. Consequently, the Departments have set no budget for this purpose over the next two years.

Security Passes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Solicitor-General how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in the Law Officers' Department in the last 12 months. [150842]

The Solicitor-General: During 2003, CPS Headquarters was notified that 81 identity cards/access cards had been lost and five had been stolen.

28 security passes were reported as lost in the Treasury Solicitor's Department within the last 12 months. All 28 passes were reported as lost rather than stolen. Five security passes were reported as lost in the Serious Fraud Office within the last 12 months. All five were reported as lost rather than stolen. Six security passes were reported as lost in HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate within the last 12 months. All six were reported as lost rather than stolen.

No security passes were reported as either stolen or lost by my own department, the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers, over that period.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148022]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions was established in 2001. The latest financial year for which complete expenditure figures are available is 2002–03. Figures on the cost of management consultancy for the Department for Work and Pensions for 2001–02 and 2002–03 and for the former Department of Social Security for 1998–99, 1999–2000 and 2000–01 are in the table. Information for the former Employment Service is not available.

Management consultancy costs

Department and financial year	*Cost (£ million)*
DWP 2002–03	47.57
DWP 2001–02	23.79
DSS 2000–01	21.90
DSS 1999–2000	19.00
DSS 1998–99	12.98

Maternity Allowance

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many maternity allowance claims were *(a)* processed and *(b)* awarded in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [149009]

(2) what reasons are given for refusing maternity allowance claims; [149010]

(3) how many women were eligible for maternity allowance in each year since 1997. [149011]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the table.

In order to receive maternity allowance (MA), a woman must have been employed and/or self-employed in at least 26 weeks in the 66 week period ending with the week before her expected week of childbirth (the test period), and earn on average at least £30 a week averaged over any 13 weeks in that test period.

In most cases where a claim to MA does not result in an award, it is because the qualifying conditions have not been met. In a very small number of cases, a claim will not result in an award because it was outside the time limits; the earliest a woman may claim MA is 14 weeks before here expected week of childbirth, and a claim must be made within three months of the date her MA is due to start.

Information on the number of claims that were processed and the number of women who were eligible for MA is not available.

Maternity allowance claims awarded and disallowed in the periods shown

Period	*Awarded*	*Disallowed*
1 March 1997–31 August 1997	19,100	—
1 September 1997–31 August 1998	40,100	—
1 September 1998–31 August 1999	39,400	—
1 September 1999–31 August 2000	38,900	700
1 September 2000–31 August 2001	50,600	3,400
1 September 2001–31 August 2002	50,800	2,700
1 September 2002–31 August 2003	51,800	2,700

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. These figures have been updated to include late notification commencements.
3. Figures for the latest year are subject to changes due to late notifications.
4. Data for disallowed claims prior to August 2000 is not available.

Source:
DWP Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples.

CABINET OFFICE

Disabled People

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what remit the Strategy Unit has in relation to its work relating to people with disabilities; and if he will make a statement. [150530]

Mr. Alexander: The Strategy Unit has been asked to provide supporting analysis and a strategic assessment of disabled people's life chances—the opportunities available to disabled people, both children and adults, to improve their quality of life.

The Unit's role will be to:

improve understanding of disabled people's life chances, and of their underlying drivers; assess the implications of this analysis for disabled people, their families and for wider society; and inform the ongoing development of policy.

The Unit will work with disabled people and their representatives, with other interested organisations and with other Government Departments, and will report to the Minister for Disabled People.

The Unit's analysis will be fed into the Spending Review 2004.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on his policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to his Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149326]

Mr. Alexander: No legislation introduced by my department during the period in question has contained sunset clauses. The Cabinet Office promotes the better regulation agenda and the use of sunsetting where appropriate. The Regulatory Impact Assessment(RIA) guidance 'Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment' advises policy officials to consider time limiting or sunsetting at an early stage of policy development and gives specific circumstances where sunsetting may be appropriate. In November 2003 we published web-based RIA guidance which contains additional examples of sunsetting.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Audio-described Services

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to increase the availability of audio-described services on digital cable television. [151115]

Estelle Morris: Digital cable television has a requirement to carry the audio description service, in the same way that we expect digital satellite and digital terrestrial television to carry this service.

There are technical problems surrounding provision of audio description on cable. It is for the cable operators to resolve these issues. However, DCMS officials have been working with manufacturers, broadcasters, software/applications providers and consumer groups as part of the Digital Television Action Plan to ensure that audio description can be received on all platforms.

BBC Charter Review

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to meet representatives from the BBC in Northern Ireland in relation to the BBC Charter Review. [151331]

Tessa Jowell: I and my ministerial colleagues intend to undertake a number of visits around the UK, including to Northern Ireland as part of the consultation on the review of the BBC's Charter. Those visits are likely to include seminars with representatives of the industry, including the BBC.

In addition, Charter review more generally will cover all aspects of the BBC's role, structure and function, including its regional organisation. I hope and expect that the BBC will engage fully with the review.

Digital Television (Access)

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on progress in developing access to digital television for users with *(a)* sensory disabilities and *(b)* other special needs. [151116]

Estelle Morris: The Communications Act 2003 introduced a number of provisions aimed at increasing access to digital television services. These include extending the targets for subtitling, audio description and signing of services to digital cable and satellite broadcasters for the first time. Ofcom also has a duty to encourage the availability of easily usable domestic electronic communications apparatus.

The Digital Television Action Plan includes actions to ensure that digital television equipment and services are accessible to the broadest range of people.

The Action Plan's Technical Equipment Group (comprising manufacturers, broadcasters, software/ applications providers and consumer groups) has been tasked to investigate the reception equipment requirements for users with sensory disabilities and to recommend actions to help promote usability and inclusive design for all.

Two recent reports have indicated that some advances have been made in access to services for sensory impaired people, but action is needed to promote their further development and that current designs make digital television equipment more difficult to use than analogue.

Clearly there are still challenges ahead and we are looking closely at the findings and recommendations of the reports. We will continue to work within the Action Plan, with industry and consumer organisations to address these issues.

The reports are available on: www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost to her Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148030]

Mr. Caborn: The cost to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport of using Management Consultants in each of the last five years can be found in the following table.

	Cost (£)
1998–99	27,289.12
1999–2000	71,106.30
2000–01	100,089.26
2001–02	90,407.30
2002–03	107,299.50

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150272]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Constitutional Affairs occupies 64,716 square metres of office space in central London and none in Greater London.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what cost savings have been made in the Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151052]

Mr. Leslie: The majority of systems used within my Department are supplied under outsource agreements with Liberata, EDS and Fujitsu Systems. It is the suppliers' responsibility to monitor the use of these systems and associated equipment. Dependent upon the particular system being used, there are a number of measures taken to ensure proper use. These include:

access restrictions ensuring that only authorised personnel can use the systems;

controlled change management procedures for adding and removing hardware and software;

software auditing and restrictions to ensure unauthorised software/hardware either cannot be installed or that its use is identified; and

software monitoring tools to ensure that access and use of the web is monitored and audited.

Publicity Campaigns

Brian Cotter: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department has spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since its creation to 2003–04 (estimated); and if he will make a statement. [149622]

Mr. Lammy: The information is listed in the table.

Only DCA Policy Group and two NDPBs have incurred expenditure on advertising and information campaigns.

£

Financial Year April to March 2004	*Expenditure on advertising*	*Expenditure on information campaigns*
DCAHQ Policy Group (including Public Guardianship Office and the Court Service)	207,000	46,000
DCA Non-departmental public bodies		
Legal Services Commission	64,294	2,879
Office of the Information Commissioner	Nil	197,428
Total	[1]271,294	[2]246,307

[1] It is estimated that a further £200,000 will be spent by DCA policy Group on advertising covering a recruiting campaign for the lay magistracy up to the end of March 2004.

[2] The bulk of this figure covers on-going publicity for the Freedom of Information campaign and the provision of telephone advice lines and maintenance of the Just Ask website by the Legal Services Commission.

WALES

Civil Contingencies Bill

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the First Secretary on funding to implement in Wales the provisions of the Civil Contingencies Bill. [149444]

Mr. Hain: I have regular meetings with the First Minister to discuss funding for a range of issues including this one.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Office is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150264]

Mr. Touhig: This Department was established on 1 July 1999 and has no agencies. The table shows the number of staff-in-post as at 1 October 2003.

Staff-in-post as at 1 October 2003

Responsibility level	*Number*
SCS	1
Grade 6	5
Grade 7	2
Senior Executive Officer	1
Higher Executive Officer	15
Executive Officer	14
Administrative Officer	10
Administrative Assistant	1
Total non-industrial staff	49

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many meetings he has had in his capacity as Secretary of State for Wales in the past 15 months. [150653]

Mr. Hain: In common with past Secretaries of State, I continue to hold a wide range of meetings with interested parties. These include meetings with Cabinet colleagues, the First Minister, Assembly Ministers, MPs (including the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy), business/commercial interests, voluntary sector and TUC.

National Assembly for Wales

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many visits he has made to the National Assembly for Wales in each of the last 15 months; [150655]

(2) how many meetings he has had with the National Assembly for Wales in each of the last 15 months. [150656]

Mr. Hain: I have formally addressed three National Assembly Plenary sessions arising from my responsibilities under the Government of Wales Act. In addition, I meet with the First Minister on a weekly basis, Assembly Government Ministers and the Presiding Officer as the need arises.

Official Engagements

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many official engagements he undertook in Wales over the last six months; and how many of those were in Mid and North Wales. [150057]

Mr. Hain: As Secretary of State for Wales I regularly undertake official engagements throughout Wales, including addressing conferences, visiting business and industry and newspaper offices. I also attend major national events such as the Royal Welsh Show, and the National and International Eisteddfods. Since July 2003, I have made five visits to Mid and North Wales for such engagements.

Press Office

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many press releases the Wales Office Press Office issued each day in *(a)* November and *(b)* December 2003. [150060]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office does not issue press releases on a daily basis but as demand requires.

Six press releases were issued in November 2003. In December 2003, 14 press releases were issued.

These figures do not include operational notes, lobby notes circulated after our weekly media briefings, articles for the media or contributions to joint press releases with other organisations.

The Press Office also arranges press conferences and briefings, media interview requests and inquiries and also maintains the Wales Office website.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the total salary cost of the Wales Office Press Office was in 2003. [150061]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office employs three Press Officers, whose basic salary scales currently range from £23,764 to £31,003, £26,688 to £35,214 and £42,999 to £56,737.

Young Offenders Institution, Glyn Neath

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations he received concerning the application for planning permission for a youth offender institution in Glyn Neath; and how many of those supported the application. [150054]

Mr. Hain: I have received a number of representations on this issue, expressing a range of views.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Diplomatic Staff

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff work at the British High Commission in Islamabad, Pakistan. [149889]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: There are 94 UK based and 334 locally employed staff working at the British High Commission in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the average number of staff working at a British High Commission was in 2003. [149890]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The average numbers of staff working at a British High Commission (HM representation in Commonwealth countries) in 2003 was: UK based 19 and locally employed 67.

Guantanamo Bay

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for how long each of the British citizens being held in Guantanamo Bay has been held; and if he will make a statement. [151471]

Mr. Mullin: There are nine British nationals detained at Guantanamo Bay. Three of the British nationals were transferred to Guantanamo Bay in January 2002, two in February 2002, two in May 2002, one in October 2002 and one in February 2003.

The Government's discussions with the US about the future of all the British detainees at Guantanamo Bay are continuing. It is hoped that the situation will be resolved in the next few weeks.

Iraq

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards the establishment of the International Trust Fund to manage Iraq's oil revenues. [149534]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Iraq's oil revenues are being paid into a Development Fund for Iraq which is overseen by an International Advisory and Monitoring Board, as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1483.

Middle East

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning *(a)* illegal settlements in Gaza and the West Bank and *(b)* continued construction of the security wall. [149820]

Mr. Rammell: The Government regularly raise these issues with the Government of Israel. We have made clear that settlements are illegal under international law and an obstacle to a comprehensive peace in the region, and that we regard the building of the wall on occupied Palestinian land as unlawful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the UK Government is taking in relation to the building of the partition wall by Israel in Palestinian territory; and if he will make a statement. [151161]

Mr. Rammell: The Government continues to urge the Government of Israel to re-route the fence away from Palestinian areas. My right hon. Friends the Prime Minster and the Foreign Secretary have made clear our concerns to the Israeli Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on a number of occasions. My noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean has raised the matter with the Israeli Foreign Minister, the Israeli

Ambassador and the Israeli Minister for National Infrastructure. My noble Friend saw the impact of the fence for herself on 22 January.

The Government recognises Israel's legitimate security concerns, and deplores the suicide bombings of Israeli civilians. But we consider Israel's building of a wall, or fence, on occupied land to be unlawful, and have urged the Israeli government to reconsider its route.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148635]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office holds detailed electronic records on SSP claims from 1999. To provide the information for 1997 and 1998 would incur disproportionate costs.

Information from 1999 is as follows:

	1999[1]	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]
Less than 1 week	125	244	229	169	105
1 to 3 weeks	30	91	75	62	41
4 to 6 weeks	6	22	23	15	12
7 to 12 weeks	9	16	24	22	9
13 to 20 weeks	6	15	11	15	9
21 to 28 weeks	0	0	0	0	0

[1] Data for 1999 is incomplete due to the commencement of the data system in-year.
[2] Data available to 1 September only.

We are committed to managing sickness absence effectively and expect to meet our Service Devlivery Agreement target for reducing sickness absence to an average of 5.7 days.

Terrorism (Political Parties)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which nations his Department deems that political parties which remain linked to terrorist groups are participating in Govern nent. [149614]

Mr. MacShane: Terrorism is incompatible with the legitimate political life of any nation. It is not clear how many political parties globally have operational or organisational links to terrorist groups. In cases where we do believe there are links, for example Hizbollah in Lebanon, we have pressed strongly for the abandonment of all terrorist activity and the exclusive pursuit of legitimate political engagement.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ghana

7. **Mr. Liddell-Grainger:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the help given to rural Ghana. [151169]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK, in common with the majority of donors to Ghana, is supporting the implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, which prioritises support for rural Ghana, where 56 per cent. of Ghanaians live. Together with others, we are backing programmes to improve land administration, forest management, agriculture, communications, and access to markets and financial services, and to improve standards in health care and primary education.

Zimbabwe

8. **Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe. [151170]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Government of Zimbabwe's poorly implemented land reform programme and misguided economic policies continue to fuel the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe, which is exacerbated by the effect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and low and erratic rainfall. At least six million Zimbabweans will require food assistance in the months leading up to the harvest in April 2004. DFID has contributed £62 million for humanitarian assistance for Zimbabwe since the crisis began in 2001 and provides further funds to help tackle HIV/AIDS.

Uganda

9. **Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the impact of conflict in Uganda on the Department's work there. [151171]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's programme in Uganda, as elsewhere, focuses on poverty reduction. As a result of the conflict, levels of poverty in the north remain high, and have not been falling as elsewhere in the country. 63 per cent. of households in the north live below the poverty line compared with 38 per cent. nationally. The conflict severely hinders long-term development activities. The UK programme in the north has focused on humanitarian support and interventions to help resolve the conflict. We have provided £7.3 million of humanitarian assistance over the last 12 months. We will be discussing the conflict with President Museveni during his UK visit this week.

Bilateral Aid

10. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what criteria are used by his Department to avoid fraudulent use of bilateral aid; and if he will make a statement. [151172]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's Programme and Project Management procedures are designed to minimise the risks of bilateral aid being diverted for fraudulent purposes. The procedures include strict controls over project appraisal, approval, procurement, payments, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, all DFID's activities are open to scrutiny by my Department's Internal Auditors and by the UK National Audit Office (NAO).

DFID is also committed to supporting the improvement of governance, transparency and accountability in developing countries. My Department itself operates, and encourages in others, a "zero tolerance" stance towards fraud and corruption.

Along with other aspects of development, DFID harmonises its anti-fraud and anti-corruption policies with other donors. The NAO commented in a recent report that "DFID's work is well-regarded by its partners who acknowledge the leading and proactive role that DFID plays in tackling corruption issues."

EU Overseas Aid

11. **Dr. Palmer:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the UK's priorities for EU overseas aid. [151173]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK Government's main objective for EC development co-operation is to improve its poverty focus and the effectiveness of its programmes. Our Public Service Agreement sets a target for increasing the proportion of EC overseas development assistance going to low-income countries to 70 per cent. by 2006.

Over the next year it will be important to engage the new European Parliament, Commission, and member states on developments issues and to continue to ensure development issues are adequately reflected in the debates on future financing and post Inter-governmental Conference discussions.

Botswana

12. **Jim Dobbin:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's work on HIV/AIDs in Botswana. [151174]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is contributing £7.65 million over five years to a programme implemented by the Southern African Development Community to help address HIV/AIDS in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. The programme supports the social marketing of condoms, strengthening of National AIDS Commissions in each of the countries and work to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission at cross border sites.

Vietnam

13. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on development assistance to Vietnam. [151175]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department for International Development will spend approximately £24 million bilaterally to support poverty reduction in Vietnam in 2003–04, and up to £60 million by 2005–06. The new Vietnam Country Assistance Plan (CAP), to be published shortly, will set out in detail the Department's plans in Vietnam for the next 3–4 years. The key priority will be to support the broad strategy laid out in the Government of Vietnam's own poverty reduction plan, the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS

DFID's Country Assistance Programme for Vietnam will be published shortly and a copy will be placed in the House of Commons Library.

Iraq

14. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the current humanitarian situation in Iraq. [151176]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In spite of difficulties resulting from the security situation in Iraq, there is no humanitarian crisis in the country. Significant progress has been made since the end of the conflict in restoring essential services, restoring the Public Distribution System for food rations, reopening hospitals and schools, and beginning the process of longer-term reconstruction.

US$33 billion in grants and soft loans was pledged for the reconstruction of Iraq at the Madrid Donors' Conference in October. DFID has already committed £220 million to humanitarian and reconstruction work in Iraq.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the result was of the consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers on possible next steps in maintaining public order in Iraq. [150001]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

Officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office consult regularly with Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) representatives on a range of issues related to the UK support for police training and reform in Iraq.

ACPO's international affairs office has made a critical contribution to these efforts. This has included facilitating the secondment of 80 serving British officers currently involved in advisory and training roles in Baghdad, Basra and at the Jordan International Police Training Centre; and advice on the overall shape and objectives of the UK police contribution in Iraq.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent estimate had been made of the state of essential civilian infrastructure prior to the commencement of the military conflict in Iraq; and what plans his Department prepared for maintenance and repairs of the infrastructure. [150223]

Hilary Benn: United Nations and NGO organisations active in Iraq made assessments of civilian infrastructure prior to the conflict. These included United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, International Committee Red Cross and CARE International UK. The Joint Needs Assessment prepared by the UN and World Bank before the Madrid Donors' Conference in October 2003 also assessed the condition of infrastructure pre and post conflict.

The Department's assistance prior to the conflict and in the immediate aftermath was largely channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and NGOs. These organisations had experience of working in Iraq, well-established local networks and a capacity to deliver assistance on the ground. They were able to move back

into Iraq quickly after the major conflict ended and set up effective humanitarian operations. The Department helped these organisations to prepare for the post conflict phase.

As it became clear that the continuing insecurity meant that the UN was unable to operate in Iraq, we provided support to essential infrastructure in Southern Iraq. This was also informed by the needs assessment work in the lead-up to the Madrid Conference in October, following which we committed £20 million as a contribution to a US$127 million CPA Essential Services Programme for the restoration of essential infrastructure in Southern Iraq.

World Trade Negotiations

15. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the progress of world trade negotiations, as they affect less developed countries. [151177]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There have been intensive informal discussions since the Cancun ministerial meeting between Perez del Castillo, chair of the WTO Governing Council, and the various WTO delegations in Geneva, to try to resolve the outstanding issues left over from the Ministerial. However, del Castillo reported to the senior officials meeting on 15 December that these discussions had not achieved their objective.

Despite this, I am encouraged by the statements made by all WTO members that they remain committed to a resumption of talks and to the ambitions of the Doha Development Agenda. The expected increase in global welfare from a reduction of trade barriers will be shared by both developing and developed countries. It is in all our interest that we make progress with the trade negotiations and bring them to a successful conclusion.

Afghanistan

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what steps are being taken to ensure recent flooding in the Herat region of Afghanistan does not hamper future crop production; [150977]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact which recent flooding has had on *(a)* basic transport and *(b)* educational infrastructure in the Herat region of Afghanistan; [150978]

(3) if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in the Herat region of Afghanistan, following recent flooding. [150975]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A three-day persistent rain, which started on 16 January 2004, resulted in heavy flooding in Guzara district of Herat Province.

Although there were no human casualties, 500 families were affected, 250 houses were partially destroyed and over 850 hectares of cultivated land was left under water. However, there are as yet no confirmed reports of educational or basic transport infrastructure destruction.

A combined disaster management team including representatives from Government Ministries, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has dispatched an assessment mission to the affected villages. Humanitarian assistance has now been supplied to the affected families by international aid agencies, which includes tents, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen utensils, and one-month food ration. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has pledged to provide seeds and will work on re-enforcement of the Guzara district canal, while the US led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) has earmarked US $50,000 for rehabilitation efforts.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what impact the closure of the Salang tunnel has had on humanitarian efforts in the northern regions of Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [150979]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Heavy snowfalls on 15 and 16 January with high winds and avalanches forced a temporary closure of the Salang tunnel, the key route from Kabul to the country's northern provinces. However, this closure was fortunately short, and the Salang road and tunnel reopened to traffic on 18 January. Although all UN road missions were temporarily suspended during the closure period, there are no reports of any significant impact on humanitarian operations, as a result of this closure.

Bangladesh

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures are in place to provide people living in the slums of Bangladesh with *(a)* clean water and *(b)* electricity. [150345]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: As elsewhere, slum dwellers in Bangladesh have few legal entitlements to essential services. As a consequence, they experience poor service provision, including water and electricity.

There are two distinct types of slum in Bangladesh, public and private:

(i) In public slums, some NGOs have taken the initiative to act as intermediaries between municipal water service providers and slum dwellers occupying public land. These NGOs become the customer of the water service provider and supply the slum dwellers through tap points. Those who use the tap points pay for the water they use. DFID is supporting such activities through a £17 million grant to WaterAid. Electricity is not usually affordable for slum dwellers, although it is not unusual for houses to be served by illegal connections; and

(ii) In private slums, the landlord makes arrangements for the provision of services such as water and electricity and charges slum dwellers for use of the service.

Central America

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures are in place to aid the employees of garment factories in Central America who are exploited by their employers. [150346]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There are two sets of measures in place to try to assist employees of garment factories in Central America. First, in a range of Central America countries governments have in place, national Competitiveness Programmes. In Nicaragua for example, this Programme is supported through the World Wide Response on Apparel Production (WRAP), and funded by the World Bank. It aims to put in place codes of conduct that include labour standards.

Second, US retailers, the main purchasers of garments from the Central American garment or "maquilla" industry, are under pressure from northern consumers to conform to these codes and many are including monitoring of such codes as part of contractual agreements with wholesale garment producers, as well as spot checks in factories. In such cases lack of compliance is subject to sanctions by the retail purchasers.

During 2003 DFID Central America supported a national level workshop in Nicaragua to enable government, private sector and civil society to discuss national codes. This was the first time in Central America that institutions involved in the setting, operating and monitoring of codes had all met to debate this issue.

Ethiopia

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to ensure that food aid in Ethiopia is purchased from local farmers. [150104]

Hilary Benn: During the crisis of 2002–03, DFID was largely unable to provide food aid from local purchase. This was because of the severity of the overall national food shortage. Ethiopia required 1.8 million metric tonnes of food assistance, and at the request of the Ethiopian Government, this was mostly imported.

This year will provide better opportunities for local purchase of grains as production is up by 46 per cent. DFID is also considering providing cash instead of food to people in need. This will reduce the negative impact of imported food aid on local markets and farmers and will increase the purchasing power of those affected by food shortage.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the predicted harvest in Ethiopia and its impact on the numbers requiring food aid in that country. [150105]

Hilary Benn: The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) estimate national cereal and pulse production for the main harvest of 2003–04 in Ethiopia to be just over 13 million metric tonnes. This is a 46 per cent. increase on the 2002–03 harvest and an 11 per cent. increase on the last five year average.

Despite the good crop, about 7.2 million people will need food aid—almost half that of last year. This equals an overall food requirement of 980,000 metric tonnes compared with 1.8 million metric tonnes in 2002–03.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151047]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID are currently embedding the key COE functions in our programme for reviewing Business Processes and Corporate systems (which is called Catalyst). As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings.

Detailed information will be available in future once the Catalyst programme is fully in place and has had an opportunity to collect the necessary statistics.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether all Information Technology hardware and software products are being properly utilised in his Department. [151055]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A series of audit mechanisms are in place within DFID to determine that all IT hardware and software products are being properly utilised. User guidance on Acceptable Use is in force and is published on the DFID Intranet (InSight).

The arrangements to track hardware assets are as follows:

1. Details of PC and printer hardware are maintained in the Desktop Inventory software package by Peregrine. Equipment is held both by type and by allocated serial number, and details are entered at the time of issue (or re-4 issue) of to whom equipment is issued and where it is located. Periodic stocktakes are undertaken to confirm and to update the information held in the inventory database, and anomalies are investigated.

2. Details of remote working laptop computers are held in a separate Microsoft Access database. This has been found to be more convenient from a support point of view since laptops tend to require rather more maintenance in service, and more configuration information can be held in this form of corporate record. Again, the equipment is recorded by a uniquely- allocated serial number, and is allocated to a named individual.

3. A separate issue and return record is maintained for pool laptops, under which authorised individuals may draw a laptop, and sign for it when taking it out. Issues are time dependant, with users being responsible for the safe return of the equipment—late returns are followed up.

The arrangements to record software products in use are as follows:

1. DFID employs a standard desktop system, which is distributed to all users. The latest version of this is locked down—this means that only the system supervisor can load application software onto the machine, and executable program files cannot be downloaded from the Internet.

2. The Information Systems Department will load other authorised software for specific individuals or departments who require it, but not until it has been fully tested to confirm that it does not interfere with any other software loaded on the machine or the network.

3. The Desktop Inventory product is used centrally to report on what software is loaded on DFID computers, and to check for the presence of files that contravene the central Acceptable Use Policy. Where suspicious files (eg .MP3, .jpg and .bmp files) are identified, these are either deleted or the reason for their presence is investigated by the Technical Security Manager.

Software licences are held and managed centrally, as a manual exercise at the moment. A Software Asset Management (SAM) system is currently under investigation to automate this process.

Operationally, user activity on the system, including file accesses, is logged, and the log files are subject to spot checks. User Internet activity is likewise logged and available for spot checks—this includes sites visited from remote working systems.

Malnutrition (Africa)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his most recent

estimate is of levels of malnutrition in *(a)* Ethiopia, *(b)* Malawi and *(c)* the Democratic Republic of Congo. [149979]

Hilary Benn: There are a number of ways to measure malnutrition. Height for age (stunting) is the most common way of measuring chronic poverty and malnutrition by showing the percentage of children that have not reached an expected height at a given age. According to UNICEF and correct up to 2001, the stunting rates for Ethiopia, Malawi and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are 52 per cent., 49 per cent., and 38 per cent. respectively.

Wasting is an indicator that better measures short-term changes in malnutrition during an emergency by showing the percentage of children that are underweight in relation to their height. It is more difficult to determine for a country because it varies according to the degree of emergency and tends to be area focused rather than reflect a national trend. For example, in Ethiopia, 2002–03 figures for wasting rose as high as 32 per cent. in some areas. The same areas—a few months later—showed rates of 8 per cent. following the emergency operation.

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148027]

Hilary Benn: Expenditure on consultancy services for the development programme in each of the last five years is recorded in "Statistics on International Development", Table 12. A copy of this publication is available in the Library of the House. We do not keep a central record of the cost of management consultants in particular and this information cannot be provided except at disproportionate cost.

Pakistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of maternal mortality rates in refugee camps in Pakistan. [149996]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A report by the Commonwealth Development Corporation covering the period from 1999 to 2000 found that 41 per cent. of deaths of Afghan refugee women of reproductive age in Pakistan were due to maternal causes. This exceeded the proportion of deaths related to any other cause for this group.

In response to the high levels of maternal mortality, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees runs basic health units in its camps for Afghan refugees. The health units include female health workers and doctors, who provide health care to pregnant refugees and advise women on all health issues. The improved access to health care has helped to reduce maternal deaths among refugee women.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many new investments have been made by CDC in sub-Saharan Africa in the past 12 months. [151165]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: CDC Capital Partners has made six new investments totalling nearly £104 million in sub-Saharan Africa over the last 12 months. These include a £53 million investment in Songas, a Tanzanian power company and a £10 million investment in Flamingo Holdings, an integrated agribusiness in Kenya. CDC also made additional investments of £19.9 million into 26 of its existing holdings in the region during 2003.

Sudan

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the humanitarian impact which the closure of Intifada camps Number one and Number two by Sudanese authorities will have; and if he will make a statement. [150110]

Hilary Benn: We continue to be concerned about the protection and assistance afforded to all internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Darfur region of Sudan, where there are reports of further significant population movements due to the ongoing conflict. This includes those IDPs relocated from the Intifada camp in Nyala, South Darfur. We continue to urge the parties to engage in peaceful negotiations, and to allow humanitarian agencies full and unimpeded access to IDPs and to those affected by the conflict.

Swaziland

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the government of Swaziland over the decision to build new palaces for King Mswati's wives. [150981]

Hilary Benn: We understand that the Government of Swaziland has not yet reached a decision on this matter. Our High Commissioner in Mbabane has discussed the issue with senior Ministers in Swaziland, and has expressed concern that non-essential government expenditure could undermine the government's ability to deal with pressing poverty issues, including food security and HIV/AIDS.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what impact the decision by the Government of Swaziland to spend $14 million on new palaces for King Mswati's wives will have on *(a)* UK bilateral aid programmes and *(b)* multilateral aid to that country. [150982]

Hilary Benn: Swaziland faces serious challenges in the next few years—including HIV/AIDS, constitutional reform and economic growth. At present DFID is only directly financing two programmes in Swaziland—support to the Coalition of Non-Government Organisations, and a programme on rural water supply. Neither channel funds directly to the Government and both are due to end during 2004.

The European Union, who expect to provide €43 million to Swaziland under the ninth replenishment of the European Development Fund is pursuing a process of political dialogue with the Government of Swaziland under the Cotonou Agreement.

Swaziland is also expected to receive support from international humanitarian agencies to assist with food security issues in the country, and from organisations such as the Global Fund against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria to help address HIV/AIDS.

Trade-related Assistance

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the countries which have benefited from the Government's funding for trade-related capacity building and technical assistance since 1998; and how the money has been used. [149071]

Hilary Benn: £160 million has been committed to trade related capacity building from 1998—more than treble the pledge in the 2000 White Paper "Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor."

Trade related capacity building assistance and technical assistance has been delivered through bilateral, regional and multilateral channels for the benefit of individual countries and groups of countries.

Therefore all developing countries and territories and some of the countries and territories in transition listed in the Departmental Report 2003 have benefited from the Government's trade-related capacity building and technical assistance since 1998.

Funding has been provided for the development of trade sectors such as services, tourism, fisheries, forestry, public/private sector networking, banking and finance, business support services and institutions, industry and agriculture.

Assistance has also been provided for the formulation of trade policy through to benefit poor people with an emphasis on including trade issues in national poverty reduction and country assistance plans. Support has also been provided for training in trade negotiation techniques, agriculture, intellectual property rights, dispute settlement, regional trade agreements, assisting with accession to the WTO and trade facilitation.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the countries that will benefit from the £50 million support announced by his predecessor in September 2003 for trade-related capacity building and technical assistance. [149072]

Hilary Benn: Nigeria will benefit from a programme designed to improve poor people's access to commodity and services markets.

Ukraine will benefit from a programme designed to support progress towards accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and greater integration into the global economy.

The Government are also supporting a regional trade facilitation programme with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariats. The precise allocation of resources within and between these regional groups will be for the Secretariats to decide.

In addition, direct support to central government budgets will be provided to a number of developing countries, especially in Africa.

Uzbekistan

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the levels of household fuel poverty in Uzbekistan. [150980]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has not made an assessment of the levels of household fuel poverty in Uzbekistan. The World Bank is currently undertaking a survey of the Energy Policy Sector that will link poverty and access to fuel by households in Uzbekistan. The results of the study will be available later this year and can be accessed through the World Bank website (www.worldbank.org).

World Social Forum

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his Department *(a)* was represented at and *(b)* sent observers to the World Social Forum held in Mumbai this month. [149963]

Hilary Benn: Two Social Development Advisers from DFID's office in New Delhi attended the World Social Forum held in Mumbai, India from 16 to 21 January, as Delegates. Also, an official from DFID London attended the Forum as an Observer. Feedback suggests that their contribution to the broad range of issues discussed was highly valued.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Area Cost Adjustment

Mr. Luff: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reason the data used to calculate area cost adjustment includes pay data for the public sector; and if he will make it his policy to use only private sector pay rates in future calculations. [151129]

Mr. Raynsford: The area cost adjustment (ACA) is the element of the funding formula which takes account of the different costs of labour and non domestic rates between areas. The labour cost element of the ACA is calculated using hourly wage data for both the public and private sector from the New Earnings Survey (NES).

To use exclusively private sector pay in calculating the ACA would take little account of how any public sector employers, such as the NHS, affect pay in their local labour market. Private sector wages also vary more across the country than public sector wages because many public sector employees are paid according to national pay scales. To base the ACA on private sector wages alone would overstate the variability in staff costs for local authorities across the country.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recently reviewed the grant distribution system and introduced new formula from 2003–04. It was announced in the 2001 White Paper "Strong Local Leadership—Quality Public Services" (CM5237) that the funding formulae

will be frozen for at least 2004–05 and 2005–06. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not intend to change the way that the ACA is calculated during this period.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reason the data used to calculate area cost adjustment excludes overtime pay data; and if he will make it his policy to include such data in future calculations. [151130]

Mr. Raynsford: The area cost adjustment (ACA) is the element of the funding formula which takes account of the different costs of labour and non domestic rates between areas. The labour cost element of the ACA is calculated using hourly wage data excluding overtime from the New Earnings Survey (NES). The NES is a snapshot of the wages people earn in a given week in April each year.

In calculating the ACA the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister need to be able to compare wage costs in different areas on a consistent basis. This is why the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister looks at hourly rather than weekly wages, and why the wage data used is only taken from those on adult pay rates, whose weekly wage has not been affected by absence and excludes overtime. The availability of overtime to individual workers is erratic. Because the NES is a snapshot, it is impossible to tell whether an individual is working overtime as a routine part of their job, or because a colleague is sick and the firm needs cover. And overtime payments often depend on the time and day overtime is worked. All of which diminishes our ability to compare labour costs between areas on a like for like basis.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced in the 2001 White Paper "Strong Local Leadership—Quality Public Services" (CM5237) that the funding formulae will be frozen for at least 2004–05 and 2005–06. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not intend to change the way that the ACA is calculated during this period.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whom he has consulted on the plans to regionalise Essex's Fire Service; [149693]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Essex Police Authority on his plans to regionalise the Fire Service; [149695]

(3) what discussions he has had with *(a)* retained and *(b)* full-time firefighters in Essex on his plans to regionalise the Fire Service; and what their advice was; [149699]

(4) what community consultation he has held in Essex on his plans to regionalise the Fire Service; [149700]

(5) what effect regionalisation of the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex will have on fire stations in *(a)* Colchester, *(b)* Manningtree, *(c)* Dovercourt, *(d)* Frinton, *(e)* Clacton, *(f)* Brightlingsea, *(g)* Weeley, *(h)* Wivenhoe, *(i)* West Mersea, *(j)* Tollesbury, *(k)* Tiptree, *(l)* Coggeshall and *(m)* Halstead. [149705]

(6) whether the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex will be regionalised whether or not the people of Essex will vote for an elected regional assembly. [149718]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Members for Buckingham, Taunton, North Thanet, North Wiltshire, Runnymede and Weybridge, South East Cambridgeshire, Brentwood and Ongar, Poole and Spelthorne on 22 January 2003, *Official Report*, columns 1456–58W.

A 'soundings exercise', inviting views, information and evidence on the level of interest in each English region in holding a referendum on the creation of an elected regional assembly was held between December 2002 and May 2003. A summary of material received in this soundings exercise is available in the Library of the House. In the light of the views expressed, no referendum is currently planned for the East of England.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what community consultation he has held in Staffordshire on his plans to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service; [149848]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Staffordshire Police Authority on his plans to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service. [149850]

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whom he has consulted on the plans to regionalise Hereford and Worcester's Fire Service; [149833]

(2) what discussions he has had with the West Mercia Police Authority on his plans to regionalise the Fire Service; [149835]

(3) what discussions he has had with *(a)* retained and *(b)* full-time firefighters in Hereford and Worcester on his plans to regionalise the Fire Service; and what their advice was; [149839]

(4) what community consultation he has held in Hereford and Worcester on his plans to regionalise the Fire Service; [149840]

(5) what research relating to Hereford and Worcester he has commissioned to provide the evidential basis for his plans to regionalise the Fire Service. [149841]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given to the hon. Members for Buckingham, Taunton, North Thanet, North Wiltshire, Runnymede and Weybridge, South East Cambridgeshire, Brentwood and Ongar, Poole and Spelthorne on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1456–58W.

Leaseholders (Insurance)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to introduce a commencement order under the Commonhold and Leasehold Act 2002 to prevent landlords from insisting that their leasehold tenants use a particular insurance company to insure their property. [151541]

Keith Hill: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 569W.

Leisure Facilities (Brent, East)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Audit Commission has made of leisure facilities in Brent East. [151122]

Mr. Raynsford: The Audit Commission carried out an inspection of the London Borough of Brent's Sport and Leisure facilities in April 2002, in which the council was awarded a poor, no star score with poor prospects for improvement. The council has made investments in this area and an Audit Commission inspection team is planning to return to Brent later this year to check on the council's progress.

Local Government

Mr. Flook: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the rurality factor given to each of the *(a)* county councils and *(b)* unitary authorities in England for the latest local authority financial settlements. [150601]

Mr. Raynsford: The formula spending shares (FSS) formulae listed in the following table have sub blocks which contain a sparsity factor.

Formula	*Sub block*
Environmental Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS)	Lower Tier EPCS
Education	Primary Education
	Local Education Authorities
Personal Social Services (PSS)	Older Peoples

The sparsity top up for each county council and unitary authority for each of the above formulae is listed in the following table:

	Education formulae		*PSS*	*EPCS*
	Primary education	*LEA*	*Older people*	*LT EPCS*
	Sparsity top up (£) per			
	Child aged 5–10	*Resident pupil aged 3–18*	*Person 65 +*	*Resident*
Barking and Dagenham	0.00	0.00	0.27	0.53
Barnet	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.39
Barnsley	15.70	12.65	1.85	3.61
Bath and North East Somerset	38.00	30.63	2.50	6.86
Bedfordshire	73.15	58.96	3.59	—
Bexley	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.57
Birmingham	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.31
Blackburn with Darwen	13.37	10.78	1.40	2.88
Blackpool	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.18
Bolton	0.00	0.00	0.62	1.29
Bournemouth	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.09
Bracknell Forest	8.75	7.05	1.16	2.98
Bradford	10.75	8.66	0.77	1.78
Brent	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.13
Brighton and Hove	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.93
Bristol	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.18
Bromley	2.54	2.05	0.42	1.29
Buckinghamshire	70.08	56.48	3.63	—
Bury	0.00	0.00	0.69	1.53
Calderdale	30.14	24.29	2.01	4.92
Cambridgeshire	129.06	104.02	5.57	—
Camden	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.14
Cheshire	61.04	49.20	3.01	—
City of London	6.89	5.55	1.16	2.22
Cornwall	131.55	106.03	6.85	—
Coventry	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.39
Croydon	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.13
Cumbria	158.10	127.42	7.06	—
Darlington	38.75	31.23	1.65	4.14
Derby	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.35
Derbyshire	68.29	55.04	4.09	—
Devon	165.22	133.17	6.46	—
Doncaster	62.86	50.67	2.15	4.71
Dorset	125.14	100.86	4.21	—
Dudley	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.11
Durham	63.30	51.02	3.91	—
Ealing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
East Riding of Yorkshire	138.85	111.92	5.74	16.30
East Sussex	68.98	55.59	3.11	—
Enfield	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.52
Essex	54.60	44.01	2.82	—
Gateshead	7.33	5.91	1.05	1.98
Gloucestershire	89.78	72.36	4.08	—
Greenwich	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.28
Hackney	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.09
Halton	5.08	4.09	1.09	1.99
Hammersmith and Fulham	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

	Education formulae		PSS	EPCS
	Primary education	LEA	Older people	LT EPCS
	Child aged 5–10	Sparsity top up (£) per Resident pupil aged 3–18	Person 65+	Resident
Hampshire	56.51	45.55	2.29	—
Haringey	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08
Harrow	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.38
Hartlepool	15.23	12.28	0.99	2.07
Havering	0.00	0.00	0.40	1.16
Herefordshire	224.49	180.94	8.97	25.24
Hertfordshire	30.10	24.26	1.82	—
Hillingdon	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.61
Hounslow	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.31
Isle of Wight Council	85.79	69.15	3.38	9.75
Isles of Scilly	252.53	203.54	10.57	28.96
Islington	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kensington and Chelsea	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kent	49.65	40.02	2.81	—
Kingston upon Hull	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.45
Kingston upon Thames	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.30
Kirklees	28.79	23.20	1.33	3.10
Knowsley	16.26	13.10	1.06	1.79
Lambeth	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lancashire	47.57	38.34	2.56	—
Leeds	12.11	9.76	0.98	2.26
Leicester	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.31
Leicestershire	66.58	53.66	3.28	—
Lewisham	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03
Lincolnshire	169.39	136.53	6.68	—
Liverpool	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.36
Luton	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.24
Manchester	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.20
Medway	17.10	13.78	0.75	1.96
Merton	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.21
Middlesbrough	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.45
Milton Keynes	38.37	30.93	1.70	3.76
Newcastle upon Tyne	0.00	0.00	0.43	0.86
Newham	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.14
Norfolk	139.41	112.36	5.85	—
North East Lincolnshire	29.02	23.39	1.15	2.82
North Lincolnshire	101.56	81.86	5.61	14.66
North Somerset	49.84	40.17	2.22	6.10
North Tyneside	0.00	0.00	0.51	1.12
North Yorkshire	215.57	173.75	7.10	—
Northamptonshire	71.82	57.89	4.01	—
Northumberland	129.48	104.36	6.02	—
Nottingham	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.38
Nottinghamshire	50.68	40.85	2.65	—
Oldham	10.08	8.12	0.61	1.20
Oxfordshire	91.54	73.78	4.44	—
Peterborough	32.78	26.42	1.49	3.43
Plymouth	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.29
Poole	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.43
Portsmouth	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.39
Reading	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.37
Redbridge	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.20
Redcar and Cleveland	31.13	25.09	1.42	3.25
Richmond upon Thames	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.64
Rochdale	0.00	0.00	0.92	1.90
Rotherham	20.32	16.38	1.85	3.67
Rutland	210.25	169.46	8.52	28.11
Salford	0.00	0.00	0.46	0.82
Sandwell	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.27
Sefton	0.00	0.00	0.63	1.34
Sheffield	8.00	6.45	0.50	1.00
Shropshire	193.67	156.10	8.62	—
Slough	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.23
Solihull	21.19	17.08	0.89	2.44
Somerset	129.42	104.31	5.97	—
South Gloucestershire	49.33	39.76	2.00	5.80
South Tyneside	0.00	0.00	0.49	0.89
Southampton	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.14
Southend-on-Sea	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.23
Southwark	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
St Helens	8.58	6.91	0.97	1.91
Staffordshire	59.27	47.77	3.24	—

	Education formulae			PSS	EPCS
	Primary education		LEA	Older people	LT EPCS
	Child aged 5–10	Sparsity top up (£) per Resident pupil	aged 3–18	Person 65+	Resident
Stockport	0.00		0.00	0.25	0.69
Stockton-on-Tees	17.80		14.34	1.06	2.49
Stoke-on-Trent	0.00		0.00	0.24	0.53
Suffolk	109.96		88.63	5.29	—
Sunderland	0.00		0.00	0.43	0.81
Surrey	27.67		22.30	1.77	—
Sutton	0.00		0.00	0.06	0.17
Swindon	25.15		20.27	1.16	3.05
Tameside	0.00		0.00	0.40	0.80
Telford and the Wrekin	38.88		31.33	2.53	5.25
Thurrock	14.93		12.03	1.74	4.04
Torbay	0.00		0.00	0.46	1.12
Tower Hamlets	0.00		0.00	0.12	0.13
Trafford	0.00		0.00	0.27	0.58
Wakefield	9.00		7.25	1.56	3.19
Walsall	0.00		0.00	0.33	0.64
Waltham Forest	0.00		0.00	0.09	0.14
Wandsworth	0.00		0.00	0.09	0.12
Warrington	3.13		2.52	1.36	3.09
Warwickshire	80.60		64.96	3.99	—
West Berkshire	87.56		70.57	4.14	12.26
West Sussex	48.61		39.18	2.27	—
Westminster	0.00		0.00	0.18	0.24
Wigan	0.00		0.00	1.04	1.97
Wiltshire	159.07		128.21	6.06	—
Windsor and Maidenhead	40.69		32.79	1.53	4.48
Wirral	0.00		0.00	0.43	0.89
Wokingham	31.19		25.14	1.02	3.60
Wolverhampton	0.00		0.00	0.08	0.19
Worcestershire	53.30		42.96	3.52	—
York	23.19		18.69	1.79	5.26

The figures are from the 2004–05 Local Government Finance Settlement, laid in Parliament on Thursday, 29 January and are consistent with the simple presentation guide to that settlement, available on the ODPM website.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from organisations campaigning in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* Yorkshire and Humberside in favour of an elected regional assembly for powers to be granted to those assemblies in addition to those set out in Your Region, Your Choice (Cm 5511). [151006]

Mr. Raynsford: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has received representations from Campaign for a North East Assembly, Campaign for Yorkshire, Copeland Liberal Democrats, Labour North West, Sheffield Hallam Liberal Democrats, North East and Yorkshire and Humber Liberal Democrats who have all expressed views that elected regional assemblies be given additional powers to those set out in the White Paper Your Region, Your Choice.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Motor Vehicle Recovery

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the statutory fee for the recovery of a motor vehicle from a motorway was last reviewed; and what the policy of the Government are in relation to variations of the fee. [151248]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The statutory fees for the removal, storage and disposal of vehicles from motorways or other roads were last increased in 1993. Any charges outside these fees are non-statutory and a matter for resolution between the parties concerned.

The Government believe that the statutory charges should be set at a level which is fair to all parties, including the motorist and vehicle recovery operators.

We are currently considering the level of the fees and how they should be applied in different circumstances.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what level of proof is required by magistrates courts before an application for an anti-social behaviour order can be granted. [150996]

Ms Blears: In the McCann case in October 2002 the Law Lords ruled that the equivalent of the criminal standard of proof, ie beyond reasonable doubt, should be applied in the interests of fairness and pragmatism to prove past acts of anti-social behaviour which are usually of a criminal or quasi-criminal nature. The necessity of a anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) for the protection of other persons from future anti-social acts remains an exercise of judgment not subject to a standard of proof.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the success to date of anti-social behaviour orders in Gloucestershire. [150425]

Ms Blears: Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are one of a number of methods being used in Gloucestershire as part of their local strategy to tackle anti-social behaviour. Local practitioners report that ASBOs have been successfully used alongside other tools—such as mediation and anti-social behaviour clauses in tenancy contracts—to reduce anti-social behaviour in the area and transform the behaviour of several perpetrators. Nine ASBOs were granted in Gloucestershire between April 1999 and September 2003.

As part of the Government's Together campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour, we will be doing more to improve the local response, this includes:

£75 million over three years to support the Government's action plan,

Funding for every Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership,

An ActionLine, Academy and website to help practitioners do more to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been put in place, broken down by *(a)* police authority and *(b)* local authority; and how many people have been charged with breaking anti-social behaviour order provisions. [151349]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Data on the number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) granted, from 1 April 1999 up to 30 September 2003 (latest available) by Magistrates' Courts Committees (MCC) area, Crown Court circuit, and the county court group and by local authority area have been placed in the Library.

Information on the number of people charged is not collected centrally. From the Home Office Court Proceedings database, available information relating to breaches of ASBOs, covering the period 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2002, shows that the number of people who have been prosecuted for breaching an ASBO is 329, of which 305 were found guilty.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many anti-social behaviour orders have been *(a)* made and *(b)* breached in each police authority area; and if he will make a statement. [150426]

Ms Blears: Data on the number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) made are reported to the Home Office on a quarterly basis by Magistrates' Courts Committees (MCC), and on a rolling basis by the Crown court (since 2 December 2002) and county courts (since 1 April 2003). Table A gives data on the number of ASBOs made, from 1 April 1999 up to 30 September 2003 (latest available), by MCC area, Crown court circuit, and county court group.

The available information relating to breaches of ASBOs, covers the period 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2002. Table B gives data on the number of ASBOs made, and the number breached, within this period.

Table A—Number of anti-social behaviour orders made, at all courts, as reported

Magistrates' Courts	*Total ASBOs on application/ conviction*
MCC/Police force area	
Avon & Somerset	45
Bedfordshire	16
Cambridgeshire	22
Cheshire	33
Cleveland	23
Cumbria	28
Derbyshire	21
Devon & Cornwall	18
Dorset	5
Durham	28
Essex	4
Gloucestershire	9
GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[1]	113
Greater Manchester	240
Hampshire	37
Hertfordshire	26
Humberside	19
Kent	42
Lancashire	56
Leicestershire	7
Lincolnshire	7
Merseyside	66
Norfolk	30
Northamptonshire	9
Northumbria	53
North Yorkshire	13
Nottinghamshire	26
South Yorkshire	44
Staffordshire	38
Suffolk	27
Surrey	10
Sussex	39
Thames Valley	21
Warwickshire	25
West Mercia	100
West Midlands	154
West Yorkshire	82
Wiltshire	3
England	1,539
Dyfed Powys	11
Gwent	8
North Wales	15
South Wales	25
Wales	59
England and Wales MCC/PFA	1,598
County Court Group (ASBOs on application)	
London	1
Merseyside	1
England and Wales County Court Group	2
Crown Court Circuit	
Midland	4
Northern	5
North Eastern	3
South Eastern	1
South Eastern Provincial	2
Western	7
Wales and Chester	1
England and Wales CC Circuits	23
Total all courts England and Wales	1,623

[1] Including City of London

Table B—The number of breaches[1] of an anti-social behaviour order from 1 April 1999 to 30 September 2003, by MCC/Police Force Area, Crown Court

MCC/Police Force Area	Total ASBOs Issued	Total ASBOs Breached	Percentage total breached
Avon & Somerset	25	[2]7	28
Bedfordshire	8	6	75
Cambridgeshire	5	2	40
Cheshire	16	7	44
Cleveland	13	7	54
Cumbria	15	2	13
Derbyshire	15	9	60
Devon & Cornwall	11	4	36
Dorset	4	1	25
Durham	21	16	76
Essex	2	1	50
Gloucestershire	5	1	20
GLMCA/ Metropolitan Police[3]	51	[2]17	33
Greater Manchester	104	[2]30	29
Hampshire	15	3	20
Hertfordshire	16	[2]5	31
Humberside	16	5	31
Kent	36	3	8
Lancashire	23	10	43
Leicestershire	5	3	60
Lincolnshire	3	[2]1	33
Merseyside	32	6	19
Norfolk	19	[2]8	42
Northamptonshire	9	1	11
Northumbria	30	[2]11	37
North Yorkshire	7	[2]6	86
Nottinghamshire	16	8	50
South Yorkshire	24	[2]8	33
Staffordshire	22	6	27
Suffolk	9	1	11
Surrey	6	[2]3	50
Sussex	23	5	22
Thames Valley	14	2	14
Warwickshire	18	8	44
West Mercia	75	[2]25	33
West Midlands	93	42	45
West Yorkshire	29	13	45
Wiltshire	1	1	100
England	836	294	35
Dyfed Powys	—	—	—
Gwent	4	3	75
North Wales	8	5	63
South Wales	7	3	43
Wales	19	11	58
Total England and Wales	855	305	36

[1] Breaches are counted in this table on a persons basis; i.e. multiple breaches (occurring at the same time)

[2] Includes breaches where the ASBO recipient was a juvenile

[3] Including City of London

Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 in tackling terrorism in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [145077]

Mr. Blunkett: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 147WS. The Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 has improved our ability to fight crime and terrorism in a number of ways. I have provided several examples of the Acts effectiveness as follows:

Under Disclosure of Information powers over 100 disclosures were provided to law enforcement agencies in relation to on-going terrorist investigations.

Terrorist cash has been seized on 18 occasions since the Act's introduction.

Several arrests and prosecutions have been made under the newly created offences of "withholding information relating to a terrorist act" and "Hoaxing".

24 individuals have been convicted under the newly created offence of "religiously aggravated crime".

A fuller and more detailed assessment of the improvements that Act has made will be made in the coming weeks when the Privy Council's report on Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 is debated in both Houses of Parliament.

Asylum and Immigration

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the basis was of his refusal to grant asylum to Shahir Patrolli, port reference number Man/02/176; and if he will make a statement; [144475]

(2) what evidential basis he stated in his refusal to grant asylum to Shahir Patrolli port reference number Man/02/176 that he was aware that no one from the Roma ethnic group lived at Suhodol; and if he will make a statement. [144476]

Beverley Hughes: I wrote to the hon Member on 27 January 2004.

Business Crime

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to require police authorities to provide him with statistics each year on the level of business crime in each area; and if he will make a statement. [150772]

Ms Blears: The Home Office currently publishes annual total crime statistics recorded by the police in England and Wales for the following offences specifically relating to business crime: robbery of business property, theft by an employee, theft from shops and theft of an automatic machine or meter. Statistics for these offences have not been published at police force area level. The most recent volume of recorded crime statistics was published in July 2003, in Statistical Bulletin 7/03, "Crime in England and Wales 2002/03", which is available via the Research Development Statistics (RDS) website. A copy of the Bulletin has been placed in the Library.

The business crime team within the Home Office has recently begun a process of examining how current information on business crime, including retail crime, can be enhanced. To this end, the Research, Development and Statistics Department have been approached to examine the feasibility of different options. This work is on-going.

However, in view of the complexity and range of crimes experienced by the business sector, it has rapidly become clear that no one single method of collecting data will provide a sufficiently complete picture. We are therefore considering how both police and survey data collection can be refined and extended to give us a more accurate and comprehensive overview of the crimes experienced by businesses.

Closed Circuit Television

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grants are available for introducing CCTV into *(a)* villages and *(b)* rural railway stations. [151267]

Ms Blears: There are currently funds available for the installation of CCTV in all locations, including villages and rural railway stations, under the Building Safer Communities Fund. The Home Office allocates the Building Safer Communities Fund to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to enable them to tackle local crime priorities through a number of interventions, including CCTV facilities. For 2003–04, the Building Safer Communities Fund has provided Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships with £72.3million.

Community Sentence Breaches

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to amend the rules on evidence relating to magistrates courts cases involving breaches of anti-social behaviour orders to allow hearsay evidence to be heard. [150995]

Ms Blears: Breach of an anti-social behaviour order is a criminal offence and rules relating to criminal evidence apply as they do for other criminal offences. The basic rule is that hearsay evidence is not admissible in criminal proceedings unless the maker of the statement is unavailable or where business documents are involved. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 will change the rules relating to hearsay evidence in criminal proceedings to make it admissible in specified circumstances such as where it is in the interests of justice.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter to him dated 10 November from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. S. Khan. [145963]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 27 January 2004.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he will reply to the letter to him dated 10 November 2002 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Gohal Ali Khan; [147617]

(2) when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 10 November 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Gohal Ali Khan. [149548]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 27 January 2004.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter to him dated 13 November 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. E. Ebasani. [151233]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 23 January 2004.

Criminal Justice Boards

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from victim and witness services since the announcement of the transfer of funding to local criminal justice boards. [143645]

Paul Goggins: We are piloting the devolution of funding for the Witness Service to Local Criminal Justice Boards in four areas (Essex, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Surrey) from April 2004. The aim of the pilots is to improve local responsiveness to the needs of witnesses and accountability for services. We are working closely with the National Association of Victim Support Schemes and the local Victim Support schemes which run the Witness Service in the four areas on the detailed arrangements for the pilots.

In November, my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary met the Chief Executive of the National Association of Victim Support Schemes and the Chair of National Association's Board of Trustees to discuss their concerns about the proposal, and a similar meeting took place in July with Baroness Scotland of Asthal.

The Chief Executive of the National Association of Victim Support Schemes has also drawn these concerns to the attention of the Criminal Justice Council, which advises the National Criminal Justice Board.

The Home Office has received 15 representations from Victim Support schemes that are not involved in the pilot projects.

There is a range of views among local Victim Support Schemes and other practitioners about the proposal to devolve funding to Local Boards. The purpose of the pilot is to test whether devolution of funding results in more effective support and services for witnesses. The pilots will only be rolled out nationally if the evaluation demonstrates that the new arrangements are effective.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the number of employers who have decided not to employ someone as a result of a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure in the last five years; and what guidance is given to employers to ensure that such decisions are based on a fair assessment of the relevance of disclosed offences; [144963]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of employees turned down for jobs following a Criminal Records Bureau check in the last five years. [144964]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 18 December 2003]:* There are no records available to indicate the number of employees that have been turned down for jobs following a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Recruitment decisions are entirely a matter for the employer and the CRB would not normally comment on a person's suitability for a position. However, an independent survey has shown that, since the CRB launched its Disclosure service in March 2002, an estimated 18 per cent. of employers that have used the service have decided not to employ an individual as a consequence of conviction information or another matter contained in a Disclosure.

All recipients of Disclosure information issued by the CRB are subject to a Code of Practice, made under the Police Act 1997 and laid before Parliament. This makes it clear that no recipient of Disclosure information shall unfairly discriminate against the subject of the information on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The ode requires job applicants to be advised that successful applicants will be required to request a Disclosure, but that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining employment. The CRB has also produced other guidance, and has collaborated with and endorsed guidance produced by other bodies designed to help employers to arrive at fair and balanced recruitment decisions.

Dog Kidnapping

Mr. James Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the incidence of the kidnapping of dogs has been in the last 12 months; [150093]

(2) what strategy is in place to counter the effects of professional dog-nappers. [150094]

Ms Blears: Statistics on the kidnapping of dogs are not held centrally.

There is no national strategy to counter the effects of professional dog-nappers. Where this is a pressing local crime issue it would be for the police, in consultation with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to take appropriate action.

Knives

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Association of Chief Police Officers regarding self-regulation schemes for retailers selling knives, with particular reference to the CV One Knife Code. [150952]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The Government support action which tackles the problem of illicit knife carrying. The Government and the Association of Chief Police Officers believe that it is best for individual police forces and local authorities to decide how to establish and set up schemes like the CV One Knife Code in Coventry, taking into account local factors.

Market Research

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* opinion polling and *(b)* market research projects his Department has undertaken in the last financial year; and what the costs were of each project. [149729]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office research department undertakes a wide range of research activities that support the development of information-led policy, including scientific and social research, and includes research gathered from market research and focus groups.

The Department conducts or commissions market and opinion research and focus groups only when it is justified by the specific needs of a particular policy or programme and when this is the most economical, efficient and effective way to achieve the purpose. Consulting and involving the public helps inform both policy formulation and the delivery of better quality public services.

A table of commissioned projects involving opinion polling and market research is included at Appendix 1, and also placed in the Library. It has not been possible to provide detailed breakdown of costs of projects where this information is either not held centrally or is commercial in confidence.

Medicines (Disposal)

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on inspection procedures at sites licensed by the Drugs Inspectorate for disposal of medicines and pharmaceuticals. [150438]

Caroline Flint: Inspections may be conducted routinely, approximately once per year, or unannounced; such visits may take place on occasions when controlled drugs are being destroyed. In addition to checking the operating procedures the records containing details of consignments and their destruction will be examined.

Some operators are licensed to store controlled drugs pending destruction while others are only authorised to destroy upon arrival on site.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the minimum security procedures at sites licensed by the Drugs Inspectorate for disposal of medicines and pharmaceuticals. [150439]

Caroline Flint: Security requirements are assessed on an individual basis but in all cases controlled drug consignments are required to be recorded and kept safely locked away. In conjunction with the issue of the licence, advice is given on a range of matters bearing on security. This includes appropriate staffing, good handling practice, vehicle management and electronic security as well as liaison with local police.

National Offenders Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department where the National Offender Management Service will be based. [147435]

Paul Goggins: The headquarters will initially be based in London, probably in accommodation currently occupied by the Prison and Probation Services, but once the eventual size and structure has been decided, further consideration will be given to the most appropriate long-term location. Regional offender managers and their staff will of course be located in their regions.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will act as the employer for *(a)* probation and *(b)* prison staff within the structure of the National Offenders Managment Services. [147721]

Paul Goggins: For most staff in prisons and probation the changes outlined in "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" are unlikely to have an immediate impact. They will continue to be employed by the probation boards and prison service. In time the relationships will change but those changes have yet to be finalised and will be subject to the usual consultation arrangements with staff and unions.

Neighbourhood Warden Schemes (London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which London boroughs run neighbourhood warden schemes; how many wardens each of these boroughs employed at the latest date for which figures are available; which London boroughs directly fund and employ police community support officers; how many police community support officers each borough funded or employed at the latest date for which figures are available; which London boroughs run community safety accreditation schemes; and if he will make a statement. [151076]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The following table shows London boroughs that have warden schemes funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Neighbourhood Wardens Team and the number of wardens the council employs:

Borough	*Number of wardens*
Barking and Dagenham	4
Barnet	12
Brent	9
Camden	15
City of Westminster	25
Croydon	12
Ealing	8
Greenwich	10
Hackney	25
Hammersmith and Fulham	6
Haringey	14
Harrow	6
Havering	11
Hounslow	7
Islington	28
Kingston-upon-Thames	3
Lambeth	12
Lewisham	27
Merton	12
Newham	12
Redbridge	5
Southwark	27
Sutton	4
Tower Hamlets	29
Waltham Forest	10
Wandsworth	23

We are unable to supply figures for other types of warden schemes or warden numbers in London as these data are not collected.

Community Support Officers (CSOs), as defined by the Police Reform Act 2002, are all employees of the local Police Authority. In London and elsewhere local authorities have contributed to the funding of CSOs but they cannot employ them.

The Commissioner for the Metropolis informs me that the following boroughs operate additional CSOs funded through Special Services Agreements under section 25 of the Police Act 1996.

Borough	*Number of CSOs*
Camden	2
Greenwich	5
Hammersmith and Fulham	2
Hillingdon	7
Islington	4
Kensington and Chelsea	12
Tower Hamlets	8

At present the Metropolitan Police Service does not yet run a Community Safety Accreditation Scheme in any of the London boroughs.

Pesticides

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of theft of *(a)* pesticides containing aldicarb and *(b)* other pesticides have been reported in each of the last five years; and what quantities of pesticide have been (i) reported stolen, (ii) reported missing and (iii) recovered. [150519]

Ms Blears: The requested information is not available centrally.

Police

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Code of Practice on the police use of firearms and less lethal weapons. [150183]

Ms Blears: I refer my hon. Friend to the written ministerial statement I made on 3 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 61WS.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he intends to sustain the planned increase in police numbers. [150128]

Ms Blears: The number of police officers in England and Wales reached a record 136,386 on 31 August 2003. The major component in the rise in police numbers since March 2000 has been the use of the Crime Fighting Fund to fund additional recruits above that which forces were planning to train.

As announced in the provisional funding settlement for 2004–05 on 19 November 2003, the Home Office will provide continuation funding for the 9,000 posts created by the Crime Fighting Fund from 2000–03. In addition it is proposed to provide part funding of 60 per cent for the 650 additional Crime Fighting Fund recruits in 2003–04.

The Home Office is also promoting a number of initiatives to ensure the increasing effectiveness of the resources devoted to policing. Both workforce modernisation and reducing bureaucracy will release officers to do the job they were trained to do and help them undertake their duties in an increasingly effective way. We will this year be establishing a baseline measure for the amount of time officers spend on front line duties, which will enable forces and police authorities to plan for improvement. The National Intelligence Model developed by the police service will enable forces to deploy officers in a more strategic way.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have retired early owing to ill-health in each year since 1997. [151416]

Ms Blears: The figures relating to the number of police ill-health retirements between 1997 and 2003 are given in the table.

	Medical retirements
1996–97	2,012
1997–98	1,811
1998–99	1,642
1999–2000	1,232
2000–01	1,209
2001–02	1,114
2002–03	821

Prisons

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the review of prison industries conducted by the Prison Service has been completed; and if a copy of the review will be placed in the Library. [143294]

Paul Goggins: An internal review of the strategic oversight and management of public sector prison industries in England and Wales was completed earlier this year. The report of the prison industries review was written for internal discussion, and contains proposals for improving the way in which prison industries are operated and managed. These proposals are now being implemented. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people have been held in prisons in each year since 1997; [147355]

(2) how many prisoners have been held in police cells in each year since 1997 because of overcrowding in the Prison Service; [147357]

(3) how many *(a)* convicted prisoners and *(b)* remand prisoners who should have been in a prison establishment have been held in police cells in each year since 1997. [147376]

Paul Goggins: Information on the annual average population in prison and in police cells by type of custody is given in table 1.3 of Prison Statistics England and Wales, 1997 to 2002. Copies of Prison Statistics England and Wales are available in the Library.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to reduce prison overcrowding in the next two years. [147360]

Paul Goggins: On 6 January a radical reform of the management of offenders was announced with the publication of the document 'Reducing Crime—Changing Lives'. The overriding purpose of the reforms is to improve the management of offenders and reduce re-offending. Offenders for whom prison is the right penalty will continue to be sent to prison. But there are many offenders for whom tough non-custodial penalties will be more appropriate. Our proposals will provide sentencers with a full range of penalties and advice on what is most likely to be effective in reducing re-offending in particular circumstances.

Prostitution

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's policy is on the licensing of brothels. [150633]

Caroline Flint: It is an offence to keep or manage a brothel.

Reoffending

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of those who have undertaken the Intensive Change and Control Programmes in each year since 1997 reoffended within *(a)* one year, *(b)* two years, *(c)* three years, *(d)* four years and *(e)* five years. [147364]

Paul Goggins: The Intensive Control and Change Programme (ICCP) was launched on 3 April 2003. There have been 269 commencements to date, but since orders are made for 12 month periods no yearly reoffending statistics are available.

Retail Crime

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether separate statistics are kept on retail crime. [151350]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Currently, with the exception of a limited number of crime categories, such as 'theft from shops', which explicitly relate to retail crime—police recorded crime figures provide only a very limited picture of crimes experienced by the retail sector.

However, surveys such as the recent Commercial Victimisation Survey 2002 (a survey of over 6,500 retail and manufacturing premises) provide a fuller and more accurate picture of business crime, measuring both reported and unreported crime.

This survey captures statistics on crime experienced by businesses in the previous year, the cost of crime, concerns about problems and crime in the local area, action taken by businesses to respond to criminal incidents and their crime prevention precautions.

Provisional headline findings were released on 13 August 2003. The main findings should be published this spring.

Road Rage

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what data the Government collates on the average annual number of crimes committed as a result of road rage incidents. [148149]

Ms Blears: The requested information is not available centrally.

Young Offenders

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from Independent Monitoring Boards concerning the treatment of children in young offender institutions. [144363]

Paul Goggins: The treatment of children is mentioned in every Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Boards of Young Offenders Institutions. There were five specific questions asked of the Secretary of State during the 2002–03 reporting year.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 29 January 2004

TREASURY

Immigration

20. **Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the contribution of immigration to economic growth. [151562]

Ruth Kelly: The economic analysis and projections set out in the Treasury paper on Trend Growth, published alongside the Budget in April 2002, imply a contribution from net migration of about 0.4 percentage points towards the 2¾ per cent. annual trend rate of output growth. Subsequent updates have not changed this.

Energy Efficiency

21. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans his Department has to use the tax system to encourage energy efficiency in housing. [151563]

23. **Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to report on his Department's public consultation on fiscal measures to support energy efficiency. [151565]

John Healey: The Government are already making extensive use of the tax system to encourage energy-efficient housing. We have introduced a reduced rate of 5 per cent. VAT for certain contractor-installed energy-saving materials, and grant-funded installation of central heating systems, heating appliances, factory-insulated hot water tanks, micro-CHP and renewable energy heating systems. The HM Treasury/DEFRA consultation on the use of economic instruments to promote household energy efficiency closed on 24 October 2003. The Government received 126 responses, and published a summary of responses on the Treasury web site on 11 December. Responses are being carefully considered as part of the Government's development of policy in this area. In the pre-Budget Report (Cm 6042), the Government announced that we believe that there is a case for further use of economic instruments as part of a package of measures to promote energy efficiency.

As a part of this work, the Government are continuing to examine the case for a domestic business tax allowance, and to explore the potential for capital allowances and VAT measures to help deliver this.

Trade Deficits

22. **Mr. Walter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the long term effect on the UK economy of continuing trade deficits. [151564]

Ruth Kelly: The current scale of the UK trade deficit needs to be viewed in perspective. In recent years, the UK economy has been growing faster than many of our key trade partners, particularly those in the Euro area, so boosting our trade deficit. Nevertheless, the UK's trade and current account deficits have remained well below previous peaks.

Financial Services Authority

24. **Keith Vaz:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the supervision of banks by the Financial Services Authority. [151566]

Ruth Kelly: As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, responsibility for the supervision of banks moved from the Bank of England to the Financial Services Authority on 1 June 1998. The legislative framework for the regulation of banks was subsequently reformed under the Financial Services and Markets Act, which came into effect on 1 December 2001. The regime for prudential supervision of banks is kept under constant review, both at home and internationally, in forums such as the European Union and the Basle Committee on Banking Supervision.

Central Government Spending

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of gross administrative expenditure in central government as a proportion of total managed expenditure was for *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04. [R] [145608]

Mr. Gordon Brown: The most appropriate measure of comparison between this year and 1996–97 is for planned expenditure on central administration as a percentage of total government spending, using the measures available at the time. This yields a figure which is 4.4 per cent. for 2003–4 and falling in future years, against a planned 4.9 per cent. in 1996–97. We cannot yet compare final out-turns because figures are not yet available for this year but, based on previous years' experience, we would expect this year's out-turn to be lower than the 4.6 per cent. of total government spending out-turn figure for 1996–97.

Economic Indices (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* RPI, *(b)* RPI-X and *(c)* CPI was for Wales in each year since 1997. [151761]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from John Pullinger to Mr. Bill Wiggin, dated 29 January 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the *(a)* RPI, *(b)* RPI-X and *(c)* CPI was for Wales in each year since 1997. I am replying in his absence. (151761)

The RPI, RPIX and CPI are calculated and published for the United Kingdom only. Comparable indices for Wales, or any of the regions or countries of the UK, are not produced because the data required to make such calculations to an appropriate degree of accuracy are not available.

However, ONS published updated regional price levels in November 2003, in an article entitled *Relative Regional Consumer Price Levels in 2003*, available from the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/article.asp?ID=612

The data represent part of a longer-term project to develop regional price data, and reflect the need for this information expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his 2003 Budget Statement.

Endowment Mis-selling

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received about the mis-selling of endowment policies. [151571]

Ruth Kelly: We receive occasional representations about the mis-selling of endowment policies. However, the Financial Ombudsman Service established under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 deals with individual disputes between consumers and financial firms.

Housing Market (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the housing market in Wales. [151760]

Ruth Kelly: The Treasury monitors regional housing market developments, and from time to time reports on them. For example Box A4 in the 2002 pre-Budget report (CM 5664) discussed regional house price differentials. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "House Price Index Statistical Release" (available at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pns//pnattach/20040004/7.pdf) includes regular reporting of regional housing market developments.

Low Pay

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his strategy to tackle areas of persistent low pay. [151558]

John Healey: Since its introduction in April 1999 the National Minimum Wage (NMW) has been increased by 25 per cent. to £4.50 per hour for workers aged 22 and over. Together with the NMW, the reforms to income tax and National Insurance Contributions and the introduction of tax credits have boosted in-work incomes for households on low and moderate earnings.

Mutual Insurance Companies

Mr. Love: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the regulatory environment as it affects mutual insurance companies. [151555]

Ruth Kelly: The Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 sets the overall regulatory framework for mutual insurance companies. Under the Act, the FSA has operational responsibility for regulating these companies.

Personal Debt

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with representatives of the Bank of England regarding the sustainability of current levels of personal debt. [151560]

Ruth Kelly: The Treasury and the Bank of England hold regular meetings in a number of contexts to discuss a wide range of economic issues.

Security Passes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many security passes have been reported as *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [151521]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten) on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 115–16W.

Stamp Duty Land Tax

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reform Stamp Duty Land Tax on leases. [151559]

Dawn Primarolo: All tax rates and thresholds are kept under review and can be changed as part of the annual Finance Bill. I cannot anticipate what my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer might announce in this year's Budget.

Following consultation earlier this year, substantial changes were made to the Stamp Duty Land Tax charge on the rental element of new leases which will help all tenants and will be of special benefit to small and medium sized businesses.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many letters to the Paymaster General from honourable Members complaining about the operation of the new tax credits have been answered by *(a)* civil servants and *(b)* the Paymaster General. [150027]

Dawn Primarolo: Under long-standing arrangements, Members' letters to Treasury Ministers on operational matters are normally forwarded to the Heads of the Offices concerned to reply direct, unless the Member indicates that he or she requires a Ministerial reply.

Since March 2003 around 1,500 such letters from hon. Members to Treasury Ministers have been referred to the Tax Credits Office in Great Britain for answer by officials.

World Debt

David Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proposals for debt relief mechanisms for poor countries are being considered for the period after the highly indebted poor countries initiative has ended. [151543]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the hon. Member for New Forest, West (Mr. Swayne).

NORTHERN IRELAND

Air Transport

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with his colleagues in the Department for Transport in relation to the implications for Northern Ireland of the Department's White Paper, The Future of Air Transport; and if he will make a statement. [151336]

Mr. Spellar: The White Paper, The Future of Air Transport, reflects the overarching perspective of the Northern Ireland administration on the key issues surrounding the development of air transport within the United Kingdom, as they affect Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland administration's input to the production of the White Paper reflected the cross-cutting and inter-departmental character of the issues previously consulted on during 2002. A senior official from the Northern Ireland Civil Service was a member, together with representatives from other regions and the Department for Transport, of the steering group that produced the White Paper. The implications of the White Paper for Northern Ireland's three commercial airports are currently being considered locally and in consultation with the Department for Transport within the 'balanced approach' of economic development, people's desire to travel, environmental impact, safety and security and the continuation of air services to the major London airports.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact of the availability of anti-social behaviour orders in tackling such behaviour in Northern Ireland. [151332]

Mr. Spellar: In considering measures to tackle anti-social behaviour in Northern Ireland, and the impact of this, I have been informed by Home Office research in England and Wales. Research found that in many areas anti-social behaviour orders were considered by those using them to be an effective response to such behaviour. Reported benefits were a reduction in the behaviour targeted and positive outcomes in relation to public confidence and improved quality of life.

Car Parking Charges

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by what percentage car park charging has changed in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [151327]

Mr. Spellar: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Roads Service to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

Benefit Fraud

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted of benefit fraud in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available; what the average sentence was; and if he will make a statement. [150662]

Mr. Spellar: In the 2002–03 financial year a total of 325 people where prosecuted for benefit fraud and in the current year 2003–04 to date a further 200 people have been prosecuted. A breakdown of the sentences passed is shown in the table.

	Number of people	*Average sentence/Fine*
2002–03		
Probation	9	6–12 months
Suspended sentences	21	6 weeks-18 months
Conditional discharge	83	12 months-2 years
Community service	43	109 hours
Fines[1]	178	£191
2003–04		
Probation	8	2–18 months
Suspended sentences	12	1–5 months
Conditional discharge	78	6 months-3 years
Community service	20	126 hours
Fines	82	£209

[1] 9 of the 178 also received a fine in addition to either a conditional discharge or community service)

In 2002–03 a further 24 people received a formal caution and 67 people accepted administrative penalties totalling £18,255. In 2003–04 to date 22 people received a formal caution and 94 have accepted administrative penalties totalling £32,828.

Child Poverty

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress in Northern Ireland in reducing child poverty. [150674]

Mr. Spellar: New Targeting Social Need (TSN) is the Government's main policy for tackling poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland. New TSN aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion by targeting efforts and available resources within existing departmental programmes towards people, groups and areas in greatest social need.

An independent external evaluation of New Targeting Social Need has now been completed. This assessed the way in which the policy had been implemented and examined its impact. The outcome of the evaluation will feed into future thinking on New TSN and will soon be the subject of public consultation.

Presently in Northern Ireland, the Government are placing significant emphasis on initiatives that are focused on the early years of life, such as the Sure Start and Book Start and the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme. These complement mainstream service programmes.

Alongside these initiatives the Government are developing long-term strategies dealing with child poverty. To this end the Children's and Young People's unit of The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is currently developing a 10-year strategy of which child poverty is one of the key themes. The focus of the strategy is poverty, participation, protection and provision. As part of the development of this strategy, a multi agency group in November 2003 produced a strategic objective and related measures and outcomes specifically tackling child poverty. The group also considered how to take this forward and how the

Children's Strategy should dovetail with the wider New TSN strategy (current and future) for tackling poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland.

A total of £36 million has been made available through the Children's Executive Programme Fund with the specific aim of supporting children in need and young people at risk. £17 million has already been allocated for projects involving children and young people in areas including health, education, play and working with children at risk.

Recent research commissioned by OFMDFM entitled "Low Income Households in Northern Ireland" shows that the concentration (proportion of those in poverty who are children) of children in poverty between 1990–94 has dropped from 36 per cent. to 33 per cent. between 1999–2002. A copy of the report has been placed in the House Library and it can also be viewed on the internet at http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/research/lowincome/index.htm

Cot Deaths

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cot deaths there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years; and what advice is given by his Department to prevent such deaths. [151340]

Angela Smith: The information requested, based on the latest years for which figures are available, is as follows:

	Number of cot deaths
1999	11
2000	12
2001	10

Since the early 1990s parents have been advised of the risk factors associated with cot deaths and how to avoid them through the Reduce the Risk Cot Death leaflets. Last July my Department issued an updated leaflet to parents on how they can reduce the risks. The new leaflet was developed after consultation with health professionals and the Foundation for Sudden Infant Deaths and contains advice on the safest sleeping arrangements for babies.

My Department continues to monitor research findings and will issue revised guidance as appropriate.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals were provided with digital hearing aids in 2003; and what estimate he has made of how many others would benefit from these devices. [151218]

Angela Smith: The phased introduction of Digital Hearing Aids (DHAs) commenced in October 2003. Information on the provision of hearing aids is not collected routinely by the Department. Health and Social Services Trusts with Audiology departments will shortly be asked to provide information on the provision of DHAs for the period October 2003 to the end of January. Information will thereafter be collected on a quarterly basis.

It is estimated that there are over 100,000 hearing aid users in Northern Ireland. Research suggests that digital hearing aids (DHAs) may benefit 80 per cent. of hearing aid users.

Doctors (Working Hours)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of *(a)* junior house officers, *(b)* senior house officers and *(c)* other doctors have weekly workloads in breach of the EU working time directives. [151210]

Angela Smith: From the latest monitoring of New Deal compliance, 91 per cent. of junior doctors (this includes Pre-Registration House Officers, Senior House Officers and Specialist Registrars) are already working and being trained in less than 56 hours per week and are thus meeting the requirements of the European Working Time Directive which will come into effect in August 2004. It is not possible, without disproportionate cost, to disaggregate the figures in the form requested.

The new consultant contract, which is being introduced from April 2004, aims to cap the average working week for consultants at 48 hours to ensure compliance with the Directive.

Drownings

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many drownings there were in Northern Ireland in 2003. [148838]

Mr. Pearson: Mortality statistics for 2003 have not been fully collated and therefore the latest available data relate to 2002. There were 28 deaths caused by drowning[1] registered in Northern Ireland in 2002.

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code T75.1.

Elective Surgery

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress on protected elective surgery centres in Northern Ireland. [151217]

Angela Smith: A number of protected elective facilities have been established, at Altnagelvin, Causeway, Erne, Lagan Valley and Mater hospitals. The unit at Altnagelvin hospital opened in 2001 and currently treats approximately 1,100 patients per year. The protected elective centre at Causeway hospital opened in November 2003 and is projected to provide 920 surgical procedures per annum. The unit at Lagan Valley hospital was opened in February 2003 and treats around 850 patients a year. The Mater hospital's protected facility opened in January 2003 and is anticipated to treat 1,100 patients per year. In addition, a new day procedures unit opened at Erne hospital in December 2003 and it will provide for an additional 300 day cases per annum.

Work is also currently being undertaken to establish a protected elective centre at South Tyrone hospital.

Game Licences

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many game licences were issued in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1990, *(c)* 1995, *(d)* 2000 and *(e)* in each year since 2001. [150680]

Mr. Spellar: The number of game licences issued in Northern Ireland were:

Year	*Number of Licences*
1985	[1]2,000
1990	1,722
1995	[1]1,000
2000	958
2001	983
2002	1,018
2003	1,251

[1] This is an estimation based on the value of licences sold.

GM Crops

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what applications to grow GM crops have been made in Northern Ireland. [151339]

Angela Smith: There has only ever been one application to grow GM crops in Northern Ireland. This was made in 1996 by the Department of Agriculture to carry out a small field-trial on potatoes. This application was dealt with through the regulatory process established under the Genetically Modified Organisms (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 and the Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) Regulations 1994. Papers are available for viewing by the public on a statutory Public Register at the Department of the Environment's Environmental Policy Division, River House, 48 High Street, Belfast, BT1 2AW. Telephone 028 90257362.

High Hedges

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will include measures to deal with high hedges in his consultation on tackling anti-social behaviour in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [150683]

Angela Smith: The current consultation on anti-social behaviour measures is focused on such behaviour linked to criminality. Therefore, it does not cover hedges between neighbours.

GP Vacancies

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many general practitioner vacancies there were in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997; and what steps he is taking to reduce such figures. [151322]

Angela Smith: There is generally no problem filling practice vacancies in Northern Ireland. The Central Services Agency (CSA) only hold information on GP vacancies where they were required to intervene to fill the vacancy. This typically occurs if the vacancy has arisen in what was previously a single-handed GP Practice. Otherwise the remaining GPs within the practice, as independent contractors, advertise and fill the position independently.

The number of vacancies notified to, and filled by, CSA are shown in the table.

GP vacancies notified to Central Services Agency: 1997–2003

Year	*Vacancies reported to Central Services Agency*	*Vacancies filled by Central Services Agency*
1997	3	3
1998	1	1
1999	0	0
2000	0	0
2001	1	1
2002	1	1
2003	3	3

Hare Coursing

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer given by the hon. Member for Basildon (Angela Smith), on 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 577–78W, on hare coursing, what sources other than the principal sources cited in his answer he used to reach his decision to refuse a licence to a coursing club to net hares. [150049]

Angela Smith: In addition to the two principal sources of information referred to in my previous answer of 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 578W, an unpublished research thesis by Karina Dingerkus, completed in 1997, provided contextual data reporting a decline in the population of the Irish hare in Northern Ireland over the preceding years. Her thesis, entitled "The Distribution and Ecology of the Irish Hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus* in Northern Ireland", is lodged in the Science Library of the Queen's University of Belfast. Her findings were summarised and discussed in the report of the 2002 Survey carried out by Dr. Jane Preston and others.

Hospital Doctors

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which grades of hospital doctors will be required to undergo an appraisal process in 2004 in Northern Ireland. [150756]

Angela Smith: All consultant medical staff (including consultants in public health medicine and consultant clinical academic staff) and non-consultant career grade doctors (including Staff Grade doctors and Associate Specialists) will be required to undergo an appraisal in 2004.

Arrangements for the appraisal of doctors in the training grades are currently being developed, and it is anticipated that all such doctors will also be appraised in 2004.

Integrated Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of pupils in education in Northern Ireland are being educated at integrated schools; and what the percentage was in each of the last five academic years. [148766]

Jane Kennedy: Information for the 2003–04 school year is not yet available. The percentages for the last five academic years are as follows.

Academic year	Percentage
1998–99	3.3
1999–2000	3.7
2000–01	4.0
2001–02	4.3
2002–03	4.6

Maghaberry Prison

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recent disorder at HM Prison Maghaberry. [150684]

Jane Kennedy: I utterly condemn the serious rioting and wanton destruction of prison property that took place in Maghaberry on 14 to 15 January. It is to the great credit of prison staff that the incident was brought to a conclusion without serious injury to staff or prisoners.

Charges under prison rules have been laid against all those involved who are still in custody.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the financial costs resulting from overnight disturbance by prisoners at Maghaberry Prison on 14 to 15 January. [150733]

Jane Kennedy: The estimated cost of the damage caused during the disturbance on 14 to 15 January is £100,000 to £150,000.

Maze Prison (Redevelopment)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has for the redevelopment of the former HM Prison Maze site; and if he will make a statement on progress. [150668]

Mr. Pearson: The Government's aim is to regenerate this key strategic site to bring the maximum possible social and economic benefit to Northern Ireland. A consultation panel has been established to provide advice on the best way forward. The panel is currently engaged in a public consultation process to generate ideas for the redevelopment of the site. The consultation will end on 29 February, and the panel is expected to submit its final report in May.

Minority Ethnic Groups (Harassment/Bullying)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reports he has received of bullying and harassment experienced by members of minority ethnic groups who are pupils, students and staff at schools and educational establishments in Northern Ireland; and what actions have been taken as a result. [149246]

Jane Kennedy: The Department of Education does not collect information about bullying or harassment of pupils who are members of minority ethnic groups at schools in Northern Ireland. However, the Department recognises that bullying in whatever form and for whatever reason has no place in schools. The Department has issued comprehensive guidance to all schools about how to tackle bullying. Further, the Education and Libraries (NI Order 2003), which came into operation on 1 April 2003, places a duty on all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland to have a specific anti-bullying policy and to draw up measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

The Department of Education has received no reports of bullying or harassment of staff at schools in Northern Ireland who are members of minority ethnic groups. Schools have a Code of Practice on Harassment which would be applied should any such case arise.

The Department for Employment and Learning has received no reports of bullying and harassment experienced by members of minority ethnic groups who are students and staff at the universities, teacher training colleges and further education colleges in Northern Ireland.

Mobile Phone Masts

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his Department's policy is on the construction and location of mobile phone masts in Northern Ireland. [151338]

Angela Smith: The Department of the Environment's prevailing policy guidance for the development of telecommunication masts is set out in Planning Policy Statement 10 "Telecommunications", published in April 2002. This statement is available on the Planning Service website at: http: www.planningni.gov.uk/AreaPlans_Policy/PPS/PPS.htm and a copy has been placed in the Library.

NHS

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many health care professionals from outside the United Kingdom were recruited to work in the NHS in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997; what positions they held; and what their nationality was. [150670]

Angela Smith: Information on the total numbers of non-UK health care professionals recruited into the NHS could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Information is available, however, on the numbers of staff that were recruited from outside the UK as part of specific recruitment drives since 2000; No medical or professional and technical staff were recruited in this way during this period . The number of nursing staff, their grade and nationality are shown in Tables 1 and 2 as follows.

Table 1: The number of non-UK nurses recruited to work in the NHS in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000 by grade

Year	Positions held	Number recruited by HSS[1] Trusts
2000	Registered Nurse	8
Total		8
2001	Registered Nurse	94
	Pre-Registered Nurse	33
Total		127
2002	Nursing Staff	12
	Basic Grade Nurses	33
	Staff Nurse (no grade given)	42
	Enrolled Nurse C	40
	Staff Nurse E	5
	Staff Nurse D	11

Table 1: The number of non-UK nurses recruited to work in the NHS in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000 by grade

Year	Positions held	Number recruited by HSS[1] Trusts
	Qualified Nurse	6
	Registered Nurse	96
	Pre-registered Nurse	27
Total		272
2003	Nursing Staff	12
	Basic Grade Nurses	18
	Staff Nurse	48
	Enrolled Nurse C	46
	Staff Nurse D	28
	Registered Nurse	78
	Pre-registered Nurse	45
Total		275

[1] Health and Social Services

Table 2: The number of non-UK nurses recruited to work in the NHS in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000 by nationality

Year	Nationality	Number recruited by HSS[1] Trusts
2000	Australian	8
Total		8
2001	Australian	23
	Philippine	104
Total		127
2002	Philippine	211
	Indian	36
	Chinese	1
	Other country	24
Total		272
2003	Indian	98
	Philippine	177
Total		275

[1] Health and Social Services

Night-time Flying

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many flights *(a)* arriving and *(b)* departing (i) Belfast City Airport, (ii) Belfast International Airport and (iii) City of Derry Airport were in breach of the night-time flying curfew in the last year for which figures are available. [151334]

Mr. Spellar: Belfast City Airport operates under a planning agreement, which governs operations, including flight hours, at the airport. The main elements controlling flight hours are: "permitted hours" between 6.30 am and 9.30 pm for normal scheduled operations; "extended hours" between 9.30 pm and 11.59 pm for delayed scheduled operations; and, "prohibited hours" between 9.30 pm and 6.30 am, which prohibits scheduled operations. During the calendar year 2003, six scheduled flights, four arrivals and two departures, used the airport between 12 midnight and 12.30 am during the "prohibited hours".

Belfast International Airport and City of Derry Airport have no night-time operating restrictions placed upon them.

Nursing Vacancies

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nursing vacancies there are in the province; and if he will make a statement. [150743]

Angela Smith: The number of vacancies as at 30 September 2002 and 30 September 2003 are given in the table.

Number of nursing, midwifery and health visiting vacancies within all trusts as at 30 September 2002 and 30 September 2003

Trust	WTE[1] vacancies as at 30 September 2002	WTE[1] vacancies as at 30 September 2003
Almagelvin Group HSS Trust	80.3	33.7
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	8.8	4.0
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	67.5	17.3
Causeway HSS Trust	15.0	33.0
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	8.7	2.0
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	35.1	15.6
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	n/a	13.9
Foyle Community HSS Trust	29.0	13.0
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	41.0	45.8
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	30.0	n/a
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	46.0	71.7
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	5.0	8.2
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	26.3	8.4
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	257.6	96.5
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	29.5	34.2
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	26.0	16.0
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	47.5	23.6
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	59.0	23.5
Total	812.3 (does not include figure for Down Lisburn)	460.4 (does not include figure for Homefirst)

[1] Whole-time equivalent.

As can be seen from the table, the vacancy situation has slightly unproved between 30 September 2002 and 30 September 2003. A review of the Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Review was carried in late 2001/ early 2002 and a report was issued in March 2002. It is proposed to carry out another detailed review of the Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting workforce in 2004.

Overseas Nurses

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many overseas nurses are employed in Northern Ireland. [150744]

Angela Smith: Overseas nurses are employed both within the private sector and the HPSS in Northern Ireland but information is only held in respect of HPSS employees. As at 31 December 2003, the total number of

overseas nurses employed within Health and Social Services Trusts in Northern Ireland was 709. Figures are detailed by Trust as follows.

HSS[1] Trust	*Number*
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	24
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	55
Causeway HSS Trust	14
Craigavon and Banbridge Comm. HSS Trust	0
Craigavon Area Hospital HSS Trust	50
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	42
Foyle Community HSS Trust	0
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	47
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	20
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	24
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	5
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	239
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	0
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	40
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	102
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	47
Total	709

[1] Health and Social Services

Physiotherapists

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what restrictions there are on the number of domiciliary visits by physiotherapists to a particular patient. [150735]

Angela Smith: Domiciliary visits are determined by clinical need. While there is no arbitrary limit placed on such visits, service provision is managed to balance total local need with available resources.

Pre-School Places

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what basis SEELB provides a greater number of funded pre-school places to the statutory nursery school sector than to the private/voluntary sector in Newtownards; and for what reason the playschool at Londonderry Primary School has not attracted any funded places. [149612]

Jane Kennedy: In Newtownards there are currently 234 pre-school places in statutory nurseries and 136 in settings in the voluntary and private sector. Of these, 52 statutory places and all of the voluntary and private places were created by the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme. The planning of pre-school provision and the allocation of voluntary/private sector places is a matter for each Board's Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG), which identifies shortfalls in funded pre-school provision at local area level. The intention was that new places created under the programme for Northern Ireland as a whole would be broadly on a 50:50 basis between the statutory and voluntary/private sectors, though at local level the ratio varies considerably, depending mainly on the level of provision prior to the programme. In Newtownards, most of the statutory provision pre-dated the expansion programme.

The number of pre-school places which the South Eastern Education and Library Board's PEAG is funding in Newtownards is already sufficient to satisfy the demand from the parents of children in their immediate pre-school year. It is not necessary, therefore, for the PEAG to introduce additional providers such as the playschool at Londonderry Primary school.

Pulmonary Disease

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the cost of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to the NHS in 2003. [150742]

Angela Smith: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Racism

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what evidence he has received of paramilitary group involvement in racist acts of vandalism carried out on peace walls between Protestant and Catholic communities; and if he will make a statement. [151138]

Jane Kennedy: I am not aware of any racist acts of vandalism that have taken place on peacelines between Protestant and Catholic communities by paramilitary groups however racist graffiti was removed from the gable wall of the home of a Chinese family living in the Donegal Road area. This graffiti was removed at the request of the PSNI.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on swastika-style graffiti on peace walls in Belfast. [151139]

Jane Kennedy: It is a fact that in Northern Ireland many peacelines have become the canvas for a wide range of social and political comment, some of which many would find offensive.

The Government will seek to remove graffiti that is considered likely to cause a breach of the peace.

SARS

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on preparations to deal with cases of SARS in Northern Ireland. [151213]

Angela Smith: In June 2003 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety set up a Northern Ireland SARS Taskforce charged, inter alia, with preparing a contingency Plan for SARS in Northern Ireland. This in turn led to the establishment of eight sub-groups drawn from the HPSS to take forward various aspects of SARS preparation and these groups reported to a Conference in Belfast on 8 December at which the Contingency Plan was also launched. A tabletop exercise, to test the Plan, was held the following day and the lessons learned from that will be incorporated into the Plan at the next reprint.

The Contingency Plan includes arrangements for any one (or all) of three acute hospitals to be designated to deal with SARS patients. Plans for upgrading work at these, and other hospitals with A&E Departments, are in preparation, while steps to provide personal protection equipment (PPE) for health care workers, including GPs, in contact with suspected SARS cases

are also well advanced. A training package video/CD Rom covering a number of issues including infection control and the use of PPE has also been prepared for distribution to the service.

The Department has also opened a special SARS website with information both for health professionals and members of the public.

School Funding

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding *(a)* integrated and *(b)* Irish Language schools have received in each of the last five years. [148769]

Jane Kennedy: The total funding allocated directly to *(a)* integrated and *(b)* Irish Language schools in each of the last five years is as follows:

£000

	Integrated	*Irish Language*
1998–99	46,146	5,533
1999–2000	53,587	5,216
2000–01	52,510	5,154
2001–02	51,257	4,759
2002–03	58,841	5,946

Notes:
1. The figures include *(a)* recurrent and capital funding awarded directly to both grant maintained and controlled integrated schools and Irish Language schools, *(b)* EU Peace I and Peace II funding awarded directly to both grant maintained and controlled integrated schools, and *(c)* funding provided to integrated and Irish Language schools through the Londonderry Regeneration Initiative and the Belfast Regeneration Office.
2. The above figures exclude services provided by the Education and Library Boards for schools, which are not disaggregated by individual sector or school (for example: services such as school meals, school transport and the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services).

School Travel

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the overall cost was of free travel to schools in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [148763]

Jane Kennedy: In the 2002–03 financial year the Education and Library Boards provided home to school transport assistance to almost 100,000 pupils. The cost of providing this service was £57.2 million.

Schoolchildren (Back Injuries)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are in place in Northern Ireland to protect children from sustaining back injuries from carrying excessively heavy schoolbags to, in and from school; and if he will make a statement. [148813]

Jane Kennedy: School boards of governors have a duty to safeguard the welfare of registered pupils on the school premises. The Department of Education provides funding for lockers for pupils' learning materials in post-primary schools with the agreement of the school authorities. Pupils share the responsibility for ensuring that they only carry to and from school those materials and equipment essential for homework or school activities for that day. Parents are generally responsible for making arrangements to protect the health and welfare of the children outside the school premises.

Sexual Health

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to promote sexual health among young people in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [151324]

Angela Smith: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is working with other interested Departments and organisations to promote sexual health and wellbeing. A draft Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan, which aims to improve, protect and promote the sexual health and wellbeing of the population of Northern Ireland, was issued for three months consultation in December 2003. It sets a target to reduce the number of sexually transmitted infections and identifies those aged under 20 as a priority group. It also proposes actions in the areas of prevention, education and training, services and data collection and research.

A Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy and Action Plan was also published at the beginning of 2003 and it contains challenging targets to reduce teenage pregnancies. A multi-agency Implementation Group has been established to take the Strategy forward. The Group has identified education support, confidentiality, services and parent/child communication as priority areas for action.

Solectron

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what grants have been paid to Solectron Northern Ireland towards the cost of establishing factories in Northern Ireland. [151003]

Mr. Pearson: None. Although Solectron accepted an offer of grant assistance from Invest NI dated 10 May 2001, the company did not seek to draw down any of the grants offered.

Special Educational Needs

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time between referral of pupils for statutory assessment and receiving the required assistance for *(a)* learning difficulties, *(b)* speech and language, *(c)* autism, *(d)* behavioural difficulties and *(e)* medical needs within the South Eastern Education and Library Board was in the last year for which figures are available. [149784]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided by the South-Eastern Education Library Board only at disproportionate cost.

Starter Homes

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many starter home initiative schemes have begun in Northern Ireland. [150605]

Mr. Spellar: A starter home initiative, the Co-ownership scheme, which is part funded by the Department for Social Development, has been in

operation since 1978. The aim of the scheme is to provide assistance to those on marginal incomes, and who would not be eligible to obtain a full mortgage, to allow them to become homeowners. Since its inception the scheme has enabled 17,500 participants to gain a foothold on the property ladder through its equity-sharing scheme, over 13,000 of whom eventually moved to full home ownership.

Tourist Accommodation

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* benefits and *(b)* grants are available when building (i) guest houses and (ii) other forms of tourist accommodation in Northern Ireland. [148765]

Mr. Pearson: Advice on establishing and certifying tourism accommodation businesses is available from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). Support with operating, managing and developing tourism businesses is available through Invest NI.

Invest NI can provide grant assistance for the upgrading of existing guesthouses certified by the NITB, the development of high quality "country type" guesthouse accommodation in existing habitable properties and the building of new guesthouses on brown field sites in traditional seaside resort towns. In addition, Invest NI can make available financial assistance and a range of business support programmes for the building and development of hotels, hostels, self-catering and bed and breakfast establishments.

Assistance is also available from a number of other sources. For example, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development offers assistance to create new tourist accommodation bed spaces under the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border of Ireland (PEACE II) funded Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative. Through the LEADER + programme, administered through 12 local action groups, existing NITB certified tourist accommodation properties may be eligible for funding to assist with upgrading and expansion. The Department of Social Development may make available grants to support the building of guesthouses or other forms of tourist accommodation to support, where appropriate, wider regeneration in Northern Ireland.

Travellers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the rights of members of the travelling community, with particular reference to *(a)* facilities, *(b)* education and *(c)* entitlement to benefits. [150748]

Mr. Spellar: Irish Travellers have the same rights of access to facilities, education and the same entitlement to benefits as every other citizen in Northern Ireland.

Ulster Hospital (Courtesy Bus)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will study the feasibility of a courtesy bus service from Belfast to the Ulster hospital; and if he will make a statement. [150746]

Angela Smith: The Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust is currently developing a Travel Plan that will consider existing services and future provision, including access to public transport for patients, visitors and staff.

As part of this process the Trust will meet with Translink to discuss bus services and the viability of various options.

Winter Influenza

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what preparations have been made to deal with a winter influenza outbreak in Northern Ireland. [151182]

Angela Smith: The Department's annual influenza immunisation campaign is the main element of its programme to minimise any winter influenza outbreak. There are two main groups involved in the campaign: everyone over 65 and those under 65 who are considered to be at risk because of an underlying medical condition such as asthma, diabetes, a heart condition etc. The Department has proactively promoted immunisation this year with a particular focus on those 'at risk', including children. Figures on vaccination uptake to the end of November show that the campaign is ahead of the targets set for this year.

This year also the Department has regularly reminded the public of measures to protect themselves from influenza and of the steps to take to look after themselves should they develop it.

The Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (CDSC) at Belfast City Hospital monitors the incidence of influenza through a network of spotter practices and provides information directly to the Department. The assessment provided by CDSC in the middle of January 2004 is that influenza is circulating at very low levels in Northern Ireland. Boards and Trusts all have plans in place to deal with upsurges in the numbers of cases of flu, should this occur.

In 2003 the Department secured a small supply of a new anti-viral drug called Oseltamivir which can be administered, in the event of a serious outbreak, to patients and staff in nursing homes, residential homes and hospitals to prevent them catching the flu.

Young Offenders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many young people are being held at young offender institutions in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the provision for young offenders in Northern Ireland. [151341]

Jane Kennedy: There are currently 191 male and two female inmates being held at young offender institutions in Northern Ireland.

Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre accommodates all young male offenders aged between 17–21 years and has a dedicated juvenile landing for those under 18. Female young offenders are detained in Mourne House at Maghaberry Prison.

All young offenders have access to a comprehensive regime, which provides for education, recreation and offending behaviour programmes.

TRANSPORT

Rural Policing Fund

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria apply to the quantification of the Rural Policing Fund; and if he will make a statement. [150020]

Ms Blears: I have been asked to reply.

External research carried out in 1998 demonstrated that additional annual costs of around £30 million associated with more sparsely populated police authority areas, were not reflected in the general police funding formula.

The Rural Policing Fund was introduced during 2000–01, when a specific grant of £15million was made available for policing in more rural areas, without reducing grant to the predominantly urban forces. £30 million has subsequently been made available annually to the 31 forces with the most widespread populations. The Fund has always been distributed according to the relative average sparsity of population.

Driving Licences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many asylum seekers have been issued with driving licences in each of the past three years; and what estimate he has made of the number of asylum seekers driving without valid UK licences. [150048]

Mr. Jamieson: All applications for driving licences are subject to the same requirements in relation to age, health competency and identity. A wide range of identity documentation can be produced as evidence of identity in support of an application for a photocard driving licence and most would not indicate the residency status of the applicant. It is therefore not possible to determine what proportion of applicants were asylum seekers.

Pensioners (Free Transport)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make provision for pensioners to travel free on public transport during off-peak hours. [151636]

Mr. McNulty: We have no plans to introduce a statutory requirement for pensioners to be able to travel free on public transport during off-peak hours. The current statutory minimum requirement for concessionary travel in England introduced in 2001 ensures half fares for pensioners on local buses, with a free pass. From April 2003, we have extended concessionary travel schemes to men aged 60–64, bringing them into line with women of the same age. Local authorities may make more generous provision, including free travel, at their discretion.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the cost of providing free off-peak travel for pensioners. [151637]

Mr. McNulty: We have made no estimate of the cost of providing free off-peak travel for pensioners on all forms of public transport. However we estimate that the total cost of providing free travel on all local bus services for pensioners would be in the order of £800 million per year.

Public Transport (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of how many people in Lancashire used *(a)* bus services and *(b)* train services in each year since 1997. [151198]

Mr. McNulty: Estimated figures for the number of bus journeys in Lancashire from 1999 is as follows:

	Number
1999–2000	57,614,463
2000–01	56,387,880
2001–02	58,672,576
2002–03	61,918,427

Note:
Comparable figures for years before 1999 are not available.

The number of train journeys starting and finishing at Lancashire stations since 1997 is as follows:

	Number
1997–98	1,515,692
1998–99	1,535,946
1999–2000	1,610,520
2000–01	1,632,682
2001–02	1,581,104
2002–03	1,427,132

Regional Airports (Security)

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Civil Aviation Authority and *(b)* international counterparts concerning security at regonal airports in the UK; [151012]

(2) how regularly security arrangements at regional airports are reviewed. [151013]

Mr. McNulty: The Department of Transport has policy responsibility for civil aviation security in the UK. We set practical security measures for the aviation industry to implement at all airports, based on UK security service threat information, and monitor compliance with those requirements. These measures are reviewed constantly with the industry. However, neither the UK CAA or our international counterparts have any responsibility or expertise in these areas and we do not therefore consult with them, although the department keeps in regular touch with them on a range of issues.

Rural Transport

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much grant his Department has given to Somerset county council for rural transport in each year since 1997. [150624]

Mr. McNulty: All local authorities in England (outside London) receive capital funding for local transport through the Local Transport Plan system. The Government also provides revenue support for all local authority spending programmes through the Formula Spending Share system. It is a decision for each authority as to how much of that funding is allocated to rural transport. Somerset CC also received Rural Bus Challenge and Rural Bus Subsidy funding throughout most of the period in question:

Rural Bus Challenge Funding

Year of award	*Name of project*	*Amount awarded (£)*
1998	The Mendips flexible bus project	130,000
1998	Exmoor community transport radio	1,004
1999	West Somerset Social Car Scheme	90,823
1999	Wells to Priddy Postbus	25,582
1999	Continuation of Mendip Flexibus Funding	225,195
2000	South Somerset	182,344
2001	Community Transport in Mendip 'Special Rural Component'	89,000
2001	South Somerset Links, Langport and Chard	197,000
2001	Rural Surrounds of Wiveliscombe	100,000
2002	Somerset Inclusion Bus Buddy	94,500

The total awarded to Somerset county council under the Rural Bus Challenge since its inception in 1998 is £1,135,448. Payments are made over a number of years, usually over three years.

Rural bus subsidy grant

	£
1998–99	1,017,790
1999–2000	974,750
2000–01	980,300
2001–02	1,285,610
2002–03	1,472,445
2003–04	1,518,856

Figures shown give actual grant paid since its inception in 1998, deducting any grant carried forward from the previous year. The figure for 2003–04 shows the full allocation for this financial year.

Traffic Management Bill

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate has been made of the likely costs per *(a)* water, *(b)* gas, *(c)* electricity and *(d)* telecommunications customer arising from the introduction of permit schemes as set out in the Traffic Management Bill. [150205]

Mr. Jamieson: While the Traffic Management Bill provides the broad powers to set up permit schemes, the detail of how they would work will be set out in secondary legislation and a further more detailed Regulatory Impact Assessment will be produced as part of preparing regulations.

Transport (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list *(a)* the volume of freight passing through Welsh ports, *(b)* the volume of passengers passing through Welsh ports and *(c)* the number of ships and the average tonnage of ships operating out of Welsh ports for each year since 1997. [151754]

Mr. Jamieson: The available information is included in the table.

Welsh ports traffic 1997–2002

	(a) Total freight (million tonnes)	*(b) Total passengers (million)*	*(c) Number of ship arrivals (thousand)*	*(c) Average tonnage of ships arriving (thousand gt)*
1997	62.3	4.0	10.9	n/a
1998	56.2	4.3	10.3	n/a
1999	56.6	4.0	9.9	14.0
2000	57.9	3.9	11.1	13.3
2001	54.7	3.6	10.5	15.4
2002	52.0	3.6	10.4	16.5

HEALTH

Assistive Technology

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the 3rd Audit Commission report, "Keeping People Independent with Assistive Technology". [151947]

Dr. Ladyman: This report has not yet been published and an assessment is not, therefore, possible.

Babies (Sleeping Habits)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice he issues to parents regarding risks associated with babies sleeping in the same bed as their parents at night; and if he will make a statement. [150755]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department have issued guidance on avoiding co-sleeping with babies in circumstances associated with cot death. The leaflet, 'Reduce the Risk of Cot Death', has been made widely available in hard copy and on the Department's web-site at www.doh.gov.uk/cotdeath/. The Department also supports the Child Accident Prevention Trust, whose leaflet, 'Keep Your Baby Safe', includes advice to parents against co-sleeping with a baby in their bed, and a warning against falling asleep on a sofa while holding the baby, in case of accidental injury.

Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the reasons for the changes in cancer incidence between 1995 and 2000. [150233]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The number of cancers in England, excluding non-melanoma skin cancer, increased by 6.9 per cent. between 1995 and 2000. This is mostly accounted for by increases in breast cancer, prostate cancer, testicular cancer, bowel cancer, melanoma, mesothelioma and lymphomas. However, this should be balanced against significant decreases in the numbers of lung, stomach and cervical cancers.

There are many reasons for the changes in incidence of these cancers.

The increased incidence of breast cancer can be attributed not only to the success of the national breast screening programme in identifying new cases, but also

changes in factors that affect a woman's hormonal environment, such as obesity, use of hormone replacement therapy and differing patterns of child birth. The increase in reporting of prostate cancer is primarily due to the greater use of prostate specific antigen testing. Increased incidence of melanoma is due to greater over-exposure to sunlight. The increased number of bowel cancer cases is partly due to diet and lack of physical activity. For mesothelioma, the increase is due to the increased numbers of people exposed to asbestos in the 1960s and 1970s who, because of the long latency period of the disease, are only now developing this condition. The reasons for increased cases of testicular cancer and lymphomas are unclear.

The decrease in lung cancer incidence is due to reduced rates of smoking in men over the last two decades. The reduction in stomach cancer is primarily thought to be due to changes in diet. The reduction in the number of cases of cervical cancer is almost certainly due to the national screening programme identifying abnormalities which, left untreated, would later become cancerous.

Cannabis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the results of recent research into the association between cannabis use and psychosis. [150747]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We recognise that a causative link between early cannabis use and later development of schizophrenia is not conclusively proven. However, the recent epidemiological research on the issue of earlier use of cannabis and risk of later development of schizophrenia, 'schizophrenic symptoms' and 'schizophreniform disorder' has shown a stronger association than was previously evident from published studies. The British Medical Journal editorial accompanying the publication of the key research papers concluded that:

> "whether the use of cannabis triggers the onset of schizophrenia or depression in otherwise vulnerable people or whether it actually causes these conditions in non- predisposed people is not yet resolved."

The Department continues to monitor research in this area and has a range of expert advisors to continue to inform policy.

Care Home Beds (Worthing)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to ensure that there are adequate care home beds available *(a)* now and *(b)* in the future in Worthing; and what mechanisms he will employ to ensure that the care homes receive sufficient fees to care for their residents. [151293]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government have made available substantial increases in the level of funding provided for social services in recent years. Between 1996–97 and 2002–03, the overall level of funding has increased by 20 per cent., an average real terms annual increase of around three per cent. We intend to further increase resources to social services for personal social services by an annual average of six per cent, in real terms from 2003–04 to 2005–06.

Local councils should use these extra resources to determine a range of care options, including residential care places that are needed locally. This information should then inform their commissioning strategies and decisions. It is for each council to decide what should be the level of fees paid for care services, in the light of local needs and circumstances.

Community Health Councils

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health have spent to date in establishing new arrangements following the abolition of community health councils. [149764]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The amount spent by the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health within the financial year 2003–04, up to 31 December 2003, was £19.9 million.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health has spent on *(a)* headquarters and *(b)* regional offices in the current financial year. [149766]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The amount spent by the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health within the financial year 2003–04, up to 31 December 2003, was £4.5 million on the national centre and £2.97 million on the regional centres.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the letter of 28 August from the hon. Member for Northavon (his reference PO1035359) regarding vitamin B17. [147956]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 27 January 2004.

Drug-related Deaths

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in reducing the number of drug-related deaths since 1999. [151462]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The figures on drug related deaths since 1999 are shown in the table. The drop in 2001 was the first reduction in drug related deaths (DRDs) since 1993.

	1999	*2000*	*2001*
Number of DRDs	1,567	1,662	1,623
Percentage change	—	+6	-2

Dual Diagnosis

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his plans to propose the introduction of a new definition of dual diagnosis into statute. [151788]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have no plans to introduce a new definition of dual diagnosis into statute. Under the draft Mental Health Bill it is

proposed that there will be a single definition of mental disorder with no exceptions or exclusions, so that people can be treated according to their individual needs.

Under the current Mental Health Act 1983 a person cannot be treated as being mentally disordered (for the purposes of the Act) solely on the ground that he is dependent on alcohol or drugs, there must be dual diagnosis of a mental illness. We believe that, in practice, these exemptions have been misunderstood and misapplied. This has meant that some people have not received the compulsory treatment which they need to prevent them from harming themselves or others.

The intention of proposals in the draft Mental Health Bill is that strict conditions will ensure the powers are only used where the nature or degree of mental disorder requires treatment under the care of a mental health consultant; appropriate treatment is available for the individual patient and there is a risk to self or others that warrants such treatment. This will mean that there is no artificial barrier to people being treated under compulsory powers when this is necessary because the conditions in the Bill are satisfied.

In May 2002 the Department of Health published Dual Diagnosis Good Practice Guide. The guide reaffirms dual diagnosis as a priority for mainstream mental health services and emphasises the need for them to work in partnership with other agencies, such as substance misuse services and drug action teams.

General Practitioners (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners surgeries there are in Chorley. [151282]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not held centrally in the format required.

The primary care trust reports that in Chorley town centre there are seven general practitioner practices, of which four own the premises and three are in one health centre.

In the Borough Council of Chorley there are 17 practices, of which 13 own their premises and four are in two health centres.

Health Forums

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patient and public involvement forums have started monitoring the NHS. [149772]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Of the 572 patients' forums in England, 549 are operational. During December and the early part of January the majority of forums met together for the first time to begin planning their work. During January and February, most of the patients' forums will have their first meeting in public. All forums, even those not operational due to vacancies, are gathering information about their local health services, making contact with the National Health Service, and talking to their communities.

Mental Health

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the use of criminal guardianship powers in the Mental Health Act 1983. [149799]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I am not aware of any research that has been commissioned on the use of the guardianship powers given to courts under Section 37 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend the use of triage in mental health provision. [151790]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A number of initiatives are being put in place to improve emergency assessment and treatment of people with mental health problems.

In line with the commitments outlined in the NHS Plan, crisis resolution services are being developed to provide intensive support for people in mental health crisis in their own home. Crisis resolution services are designed to provide prompt and effective home treatment, including medication, in order to prevent hospital admissions and give support to informal carers.

In addition, almost 500 Gateway workers will be in place by the end of the year to help people in mental health crises access appropriate services in the community.

People with mental health problems are also able to use the NHS Direct to get first-level advice and referral on to specialised helplines or to local services.

National Treatment Agency

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the current budgetary situation facing the National Treatment Agency, with particular reference to the South-West Region. [151789]

Miss Melanie Johnson: From an overall pooled drug treatment budget of £236.1 million in 2003-04, the South West received a total of £18.19 million. This was an average increase of 17.40 per cent., on the previous year. The National Treatment Agency (NTA) has responsibility for monitoring the spend of this resource.

In addition the NTA employ a team of four staff within the Government Office for the South West to support the development of drug treatment at local level. Nationally the NTA were allocated £5.5 million running costs in 2003-04 for their central and regional structure. The proportion of this allocated to the South West has not been disaggregated.

NHS Dentists

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS dentists are required to issue a warning to patients before their names are removed from the national database of NHS patients; and what guidance he gives on the removal of names. [150068]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* National health service patients are registered with a dentist under a continuing care (adults) or capitation (children) arrangement with a dentist for the provision of general dental services, which lapses after

15 months. The arrangement can be extended at any time during the 15 months, usually at the regular check up.

If the dentist does not agree to the extension of the arrangement, he/she must give notice in writing to the patient not later than three months before the date the arrangement is due to elapse and use his/her best endeavours to complete treatment before that date.

Where a dentist wishes to terminate an arrangement, he/she must give three months' notice to the patient. The relevant primary care trust can give permission for the arrangement to be terminated with less than three months notice, having given the patient an opportunity to make representations.

NHS Direct (Lancashire)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many calls have been made to NHS Direct from *(a)* the constituency of Blackpool North and Fleetwood and *(b)* Lancashire. [150660]

Miss Melanie Johnson: NHS Direct North West Coast covers the constituencies of Blackpool North and Fleetwood, and Lancashire. The statistics collated by NHS Direct North West Coast for the last six months—1 July to 31 December 2003—broken down by constituency, are shown in the table.

Constituency	*Number of calls*
Blackburn	31,632
Blackpool	6,343
Burnley	4,473
Chorley	1,151
Darwen	4,096
Hyndburn	7,487
Lancaster and Wyre	4,181
Morecambe and Lunesdale	1,321
Preston	18,289
Ribble Valley	1,120
Total	80,093

Premature Babies

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding was provided to the premature baby charity, BLISS, in each of the last five years. [150738]

Dr. Ladyman: BLISS applied for funding from the Department in one of the past five years. The Department was pleased to be able to support them, with funding of £30,000 in 2003–04. In addition, we are looking to provide funding in 2004–05 for the production of guidance on the special care of pre-term babies.

Residential Care (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on funding of independent residential care providers in Lancashire; and how many beds there are in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [151280]

Dr. Ladyman: There have been substantial increases in the level of funding provided for social services in recent years. Local councils can use these extra resources to increase local provision or to rebalance the care home market and increase fee levels if that is what is needed, taking account of local circumstances and priorities.

The following table shows the number of care home places by type of accommodation available in Lancashire as at 31 March 2001. Figures for Chorley are not available.

Figures for later years have been collected by the National Care Standards Commission, but comparable details broken down by local authority are not available.

Number of care home places in Lancashire[1] by type of accommodation as at 31 March 2001

Residential homes	*Number*
Local Authority staffed	2,345
Private[2]	11,065
Voluntary[2]	1,035
Small[3]	590
Nursing homes	
Independent	7,323

[1] For residential care Lancashire has been interpreted as Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Local Authorities. For nursing care it has been defined as south, east and northwest Lancashire and Morecambe Bay Health Authorities.
[2] Includes dual registered homes.
[3] Independent registered care homes with less than four places.
Source:
RA and RH(N) form A.

Waiting Times

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for a scan for patients with a suspected stroke was in each of the last three years for which there are records. [150211]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally. The national service framework for older people targeted in this area is to achieve a computed tomography or magnetic resonance imaging scan in less than 48 hours. The summary report of the 2001–02 National Sentinel Stroke Audit reported that more patients than ever had brain imaging, with at least 83 per cent. meeting that target.

WALES

Bovine TB

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much bovine TB compensation has been paid in Wales. [150330]

Mr. Touhig: Statutory responsibility to pay farmers compensation at market value for cattle slaughtered under TB control policies is made by the National Assembly for Wales. Compensation is paid to farmers in Wales at 100 per cent. of market value as specified by the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis (England and Wales) Compensation (Amendment) Order 1996.

Between 1999 and 2003 the Assembly paid £12,939,000 by way of compensation to Welsh farmers.

EU Funding

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding match-funding for Objective 1 projects in Wales in each of the past 15 months. [150652]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Treasury on a wide range of subjects.

The Government won Objective 1 status for West Wales and the Valleys and is providing public expenditure cover outside of Barnett for the Assembly's receipts under the Structural Funds.

It is for the Assembly to take its own spending decisions but this arrangement ensures that the Assembly can make match funding available, for that portion of match funding which it will be providing.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the First Secretary to discuss the funding of Objective 1 projects. [150014]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with the First Minister on a wide range of subjects.

As at 31 December 2003, the Objective 1 Programme has committed more than £680 million of grant to more than 1,000 projects, representing a total project investment of nearly £1.65 billion. To date, projects have reported the creation of some 22,000 gross new jobs and more than 30,000 jobs have been safeguarded.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many appeals against refusal to grant the *(a)* care and *(b)* mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance were made in each year since 2000; how many were allowed in each year; and if he will make a statement. [150022]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Elfyn Llwyd, dated 29 January 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding the number of appeals against refusal to grant the *(a)* care and *(b)* mobility component of the disability living allowance were made in each year since 2000 and how many were allowed in each year.

The attached tables show the figures for the years 2000—2003.

I hope this reply is helpful.

As at August	*Disability Living Allowance 'on benefit' load*
2000	2,160,300
2001	2,271,100
2002	2,358,800
2003	2,526,700

Notes:
Figure is rounded to the nearest hundred.
Based on a 5 per cent. sample.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5% sample.

Disability Living Allowance Appeals with issues relating to care/mobility lodged at a first tier agency, received by the Appeals Service, cleared at hearing and found in favour of the appellant at hearing: 2000 to 2003

	Lodged	*Received*	*Cleared*	*Found in favour*	*Percentage found in favour*
2000	78,490	77,940	51,925	25,360	48.8
2001	67,670	71,920	71,755	37,020	51.6
2002	63,405	66,415	59,575	31,840	53.4
2003*	52,905	62,395	52,900	27,560	52.1

Disability Living Allowance Appeals with issues relating to care lodged at a first tier agency, received by the Appeals Service, cleared at hearing and found in favour of the appellant at hearing: 2000 to 2003

	Lodged	*Received*	*Cleared*	*Found in favour*	*Percentage found in favour*
2000	10,140	10,125	6,540	3,560	54.4
2001	8,555	8,970	8,535	5,030	58.9
2002	9,795	9,885	8,070	4,815	59.7
2003*	7,675	9,225	7,860	4,640	59.0

Disability Living Allowance Appeals with issues relating to mobility lodged at a first tier agency, received by the Appeals Service, cleared at hearing and found in favour of the appellant at hearing: 2000 to 2003

	Lodged	*Received*	*Cleared*	*Found in favour*	*Percentage found in favour*
2000	5,335	5,370	3,355	1,520	45.3
2001	4,540	4,645	4,625	2,345	50.7
2002	4,480	4,695	4,055	2,195	54.1
2003*	3,190	3,875	3,450	1,780	51.6

* Information for January to November 2003 only.
Received appeals in any given month may have been lodged in a previous month. Therefore the number of appeals received could exceed the number of lodgements.
Notes:
All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
Figures are rounded to the nearest five and percentages to one decimal place.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

Incapacity Benefit

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the waiting times are for the processing of IB50 applications in each constituency in Wales. [149717]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested.

The IB50 is a self-assessment questionnaire issued to people claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB); once the claimant has completed the IB50, it is forwarded by Jobcentre Plus to SchlumbergerSema to determine whether a Personal Capability Assessment is appropriate.

SchlumbergerSema have two key targets for the provision of medical advice in respect of people claiming IB, which are being consistently met in Wales. They are: for the provision of advice without an examination, an average actual clearance time of four working days from receipt of a referral; for the provision of a written examination report, an average actual clearance of 32 working days from receipt of a referral.

Once the IB50s are returned, Jobcentre Plus have an internal target of 15 days to reach a decision. Information on performance against this target in Wales for 2002–03 is in the following table.

Incapacity Benefit (IB) Medical Test Results Cleared in 15 days in Wales

Percentage

Jobcentre Plus District	*April 2002*	*May 2002*	*June 2002*	*July 2002*	*August 2002*	*September 2002*	*October 2002*
Bridgend and Rhondda, Cynon Taf	98.05	97.86	98.5	99.9	99.74	97.55	99.66
Cardiff and Vale	98.43	98.43	98.6	99.79	98.81	98.09	100
Eastern Valleys	99.11	99.12	99.18	99.81	99.59	99.6	99.87
North West Wales and Powys	97.59	99.14	97.18	98.91	97.16	98.09	98
South East Wales	98.86	99.63	98.87	99.15	100	99.6	99.34
Swansea Bay	99.03	93.78	96.2	98.59	98.4	98	98.57
West Wales	96.42	95.5	98.14	98.64	96.51	87.32	94.54
Wrexham and North Wales Coast	97.7	97.7	99.04	98.47	98.41	99.39	98.75
Wales	98.33	97.17	98.29	99.24	98.93	97.4	98.89
GB National total	96.73	96.09	95.03	95.81	95.57	96.55	96.72

Percentage

Jobcentre Plus District	*November 2002*	*December 2002*	*January 2003*	*February 2003*	*March 2003*	*Total*
Bridgend and Rhondda, Cynon Taf	98.31	90.04	98.84	99.54	99.6	98.25
Cardiff and Vale	98.97	99.37	98.44	99.61	100	99.09
Eastern Valleys	99.74	99.55	99.91	100	99.69	99.51
North West Wales and Powys	70.18	99.67	98.61	99.65	99.46	97.09
South East Wales	99.64	100	99.84	99.64	99.64	99.47
Swansea Bay	98.72	99.17	97.8	97.55	99.12	97.73
West Wales	97.69	100	98.96	96.39	99.62	96.18
Wrexham and North Wales Coast	96.66	100	99.81	99.82	99.69	98.63
Wales	97.34	98.35	99.02	98.76	99.57	98.32
GB National total	96.94	97.4	96.22	98.25	97.96	96.54

Note:
Jobcentre Plus aims to clear all IB medical test results within 15 days. The planning assumption for business delivery is that this target will be met in 98 per cent. of cases

Source:
DWP Management Information Data

Learning Disabilities

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what training is given to staff to enable them to understand the needs of clients with learning disabilities. [151305]

Maria Eagle: There is an on-going programme of training for all staff in the Disability and Carers Service, which includes a one-day module on Disability Awareness encompassing a range of disability issues, together with two specialist one-day modules for Decision Makers covering Mental Health and Learning Disability issues. There is a commitment to review the scope of the Programme with a view to extending the specialist modules for Decision Makers to other impairments in due course.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Abandoned Vehicles

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many abandoned vehicles were collected in the Ribble Valley and Fulwood area in each year since 1997. [149793]

Mr. Morley: The information requested for Ribble Valley borough council is given in the following table.

Financial year	*Number of abandoned vehicles collected*
2000–01	16
2001–02	35

Information on the number of vehicles abandoned was collected for the first time in the 2000–01 Municipal Waste Management Survey. 2001–02 is the most recent year for which data are available from the survey.

Badgers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 20 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 1200W, how far in terms of linear distance badger culling extended from the buildings in reactive areas which housed cattle which were reported as TB reactors. [150489]

Mr. Bradshaw: Reactive culling attempted to remove badger social groups whose territories impinged on those parts of cattle premises where infected reactor cattle were housed or grazed, or from which their forage had been harvested. The extent of such removal operations varied depending on the outcome of badger activity surveys and local badger density. On average culling areas extended about 1 km around implicated land/buildings and was in the order of 5 km^2.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what factors determine the placing of badger traps in order to maximise the success of badger culling operations within the context of the Krebs trials; where traps have had to be repositioned to more discrete locations as a result of interference; whether that has required their positioning in sub-optimal locations; and what effect that has had on the conduct and the success of the culling operations. [150493]

Mr. Bradshaw: Standard operating procedures for the Krebs Trial as ratified by the Independent Scientific Group advise on number and location for trap sites; saturation trapping on setts being the preferred procedure. Traps are located at other sites where consistent anti-Trial interference or denial of consent renders trapping at sites impossible. The impact of varying trap locations is unknown.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the best estimate is of the additional cost to public funds of the *(a)* interference with and *(b)* theft of badger traps in the Krebs trials. [150494]

Mr. Bradshaw: Management records indicate that 6239 traps have been damaged during the Krebs Trial. A further 1926 have been recorded as stolen/lost, but a proportion of these have subsequently been recovered. The current replacement value of a badger trap is approximately £50.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 210W, on badgers, what measures can be taken to reduce the risk to badger cubs inhabiting the same sett as an infectious female suckling badger from infection from *M. bovis* bacilli. [150548]

Mr. Bradshaw: Practical measures that could be used to prevent the possibility of an infectious lactating female from infecting her cubs have not yet been identified.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 210W, what her estimate is of the typical proportion of badger faeces and urine deposited in latrines from a given social group; what proportion is distributed more generally over grassland; and what risk of *M. bovis* infection these deposits present to grazing cattle. [150550]

Mr. Bradshaw: Work carried out by Bristol University suggests that the proportion of faeces and urine deposited at latrines vary with badger density. The proportion of latrines located in different habitats is the subject of current research at the Central Science Laboratory, the results of which will be published in due course.

The majority of cattle actively avoid eating grass contaminated with badger faeces but tend not to select against grass contaminated with badger urine. Since most faeces tend to be deposited in latrines, which are often large and obvious, while urinations tend to trail onto pasture, infected badger urine at pasture might pose a greater transmission risk than infected faeces. However, there is likely to be some risk of onward transmission wherever either infectious faeces or urine are present on land grazed by cattle.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 522W, on badgers, what evidence there is that viable *M. bovis* bacilli remaining in badger setts following the culling of infected denizens can transmit the disease to healthy badgers which subsequently colonise those setts. [150567]

Mr. Bradshaw: *M. bovis* survival is promoted by low levels of sunlight, low to moderate temperatures and high relative humidity. A typical badger sett experiences 100 per cent. relative humidity at all times of year, a fairly constant temperature, which is always higher than ambient temperature and almost total darkness. Hence, although no quantitative studies have been carried out, it seems possible that *M. bovis* bacilli could remain viable in badger setts long enough to infect badgers during recolonisation.

For comparison, *M. bovis* has survived in manure for up to two years when buried at 5 cm deep, and for one year when buried 1 cm deep. On pasture, *M. bovis* has survived for five to 11 months.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the proportion of cubs born to infectious sow badgers which themselves go on to develop TB with the potential to spread to other animals; and what assessment she has made of whether this poses a significant threat to *(a)* other badgers and *(b)* cattle. [150578]

Mr. Bradshaw: Transmission of infection between infectious females and their offspring is thought to be an important process in the dynamics of TB in badger populations. The Central Science Laboratory's Woodchester Park study has shown that there is a significant statistical relationship between the number of infected cubs in a social group and the presence of an infectious female. However, no assessment has been made of the proportion of cubs born to infectious females which themselves go on to become infectious.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 217W, what warnings were given by her officials to farmers who were asked to volunteer for participation in the Krebs trials about *(a)* the risks involved in participation and *(b)* the consequences of failure of all or any part of the trials. [150582]

Mr. Bradshaw: The signing up of landowners agreeing to voluntary participation in the trial was carried out according to a Standard Operation Procedure ratified by the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB. Information on the Government's TB strategy and on the Culling Trial in particular was available in the form of fact sheets, website pages and reports from the Krebs and Bourne Groups. The basis for the Randomised Badger Culling Trial was well documented and communicated to participants by trained staff at the time of their voluntary agreement. Questions that could not be answered at the time on the basis of the briefing available were responded to subsequently in writing or by telephone.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in cases where badgers have been translocated from the Krebs areas, whether her Department was informed of such translocations; and whether landowners were informed. [150584]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are unaware that any such translocations of badgers from the Randomised Badger Culling Trial areas have taken place.

Bird Conservation

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her EU counterparts concerning measures to stem the decline of bird numbers in the regions of most intensive agriculture. [149829]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Discussions regularly cover a large range of issues concerning the environmental impact of agriculture. Information is shared between administrations as necessary. However, I can assure you that the Government have recognised the seriousness of the decline in farmland birds and has adopted a target to reverse this long-term decline by 2020. Latest statistics show that the index is stabilising.

I am attending an international conference organised by the British Ornithological Union in March, which will be discussing this issue in detail.

Bovine TB

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to prevent the spread of bovine TB to East Yorkshire; and if she will make a statement. [150328]

Mr. Bradshaw: There have been no confirmed outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis in East Yorkshire since before January 1996. There are currently no farms under TB restrictions.

Defra is shortly to launch a public consultation on a new TB Strategy for England, which will include proposals for a range of potential measures for introduction in the short-term. These are designed to halt the geographical spread of the disease, and include pre and post-movement testing of cattle and a review of local testing frequencies. One of the major concerns of the consultation is to reduce the risk of spreading TB from areas of high incidence to areas with little or no disease.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to standardise the collation of data on bovine TB in a format which allows for a comparison with the Office International des Epizootics figures for incidence of TB; what she estimates the costs of so doing would be; and what assessment she has made of the merits of so doing. [150510]

Mr. Bradshaw: Bovine TB is a regional problem with a higher incidence of disease in the South West of Great Britain and in Northern Ireland. Defra publishes the incidence of TB in Great Britain on a regional basis, to demonstrate the regional distribution of incidents. The OIE requires a composite annual report for the whole of the United Kingdom. The composite report indicates the average incidence of TB in the UK; but does not demonstrate the localised incidence within the regions. The composite report which is provided each year, as required for the OIE, is derived by amalgamating the regional reports for GB and Northern Ireland, therefore there would be no cost benefit in providing only a UK report and the true regional incidence of the disease would remain unclear.

In Great Britain there is an obligation under Council Directive 64/432/EEC and other Directives to provide the European Commission with herd and animal incidence figures for bovine TB every year in the prescribed format.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 210W, what the presumptive infective dose

range of *M. bovis* is in respect of cattle; and whether some badgers suffering from bovine TB are capable of excreting sufficient numbers of *M. bovis* bacilli to constitute such an infective dose. [150526]

Mr. Bradshaw: Determination of the minimum infectious dose of *Mycobacterium bovis* in cattle is part of the TB pathogenesis research programme. Early indications are that the minimum infectious dose for cattle via the respiratory tract is relatively small; the lowest infectious dose recorded so far is 70 colony forming units (CPU) when introduced by the intracheal route or 9,600 CPU by the intranasal route.

Relatively high levels of *M. bovis* in the urine of badgers with renal TB have been identified. Bacterial loads of up to 300,000 CPU per millilitre of urine have been measured. This suggests that inhalation of as little as 0.03 ml of the urine could result in infection.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 217W, what plans she has to extend the restrictions on the sale of milk from farms under TB restrictions. [150549]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

The new European Union consolidated Food Hygiene Regulation, which is expected to come into force in January 2006, will not permit the sale of milk from reactor animals for human consumption—including milk that has been heat treated.

Civil Service (Disabled People)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set out the number of employees in her Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148986]

Alun Michael: The number of staff who have informed or declared a disability and listed by type of disabilities are as follows. The types of disabilities are greater than the number of staff declaring a disability as some staff have declared more than one:

Disability	*Number of staff*
Angina	—
Asthma	60
Continence	6
Diabetes	27
Dyslexia	20
Epilepsy	15
Eyesight	35
Hearing	61
Lifting/carrying/moving everyday objects	36
Manual dexterity	38
Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand	11
Mental illness	19
Mobility	39
Other	131
Perception of the risk of physical danger	—
Physical co-ordination	16
Severe disfigurement	10
Speech	5
Total disabilities	535
Total staff	392

Figures less than five have been suppressed for reasons of confidentiality. Statistics on the disability profile of the civil service as a whole from April 2003 show that 3.6 per cent. of the civil service overall had a declared disability (1.7 per cent. in the SCS). Corporate data on disability by disability type is not published. Further data can be found on www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics. The civil service anonymous Diversity Survey (2001) showed that 15 per cent. of respondents were declaring a disability or long-standing illness against a declared level of 4 per cent. staff with a disability. This could show that disabled staff are more likely to take part in the survey, or that many people who consider themselves to be disabled or have a long standing illness have not declared this to their employer. This level of disability is consistent with the Spring 2003 Labour Force Survey which reported a level of 12.9 per cent. disability in the economically active population.

Cabinet Office set up a Disability Working Group in January 2003 to look at disability collection issues, monitoring and non-declaration. Defra are represented on this group. The group has recently completed a consultation exercise—the outcome of which will be made available in due course.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what cuts in trade distorting support and export subsidies will result from the reforms of the common agricultural policy agreed at the Agriculture Council of the EU in June 2003. [149108]

Alun Michael: The CAP reform agreement will substantially reduce trade distorting support as a result of the decoupling of direct payments. There is a degree of national discretion over the extent of decoupling but we anticipate that EU Blue Box support (defined as subsidies deemed less trade-distorting because they are linked to production-limiting programmes such as set-aside, e.g. arable area and livestock headage payments) will fall by at least two-thirds. Amber box support (defined as subsidies which significantly distort trade, e.g. support prices) is estimated to fall by a modest amount due to reductions in support prices and declines in production as a result of decoupling. However, amber box subsidies have already been falling substantially due to the previous Agenda 2000 reforms.

Both decoupling and reductions in support prices will reduce export subsidies, but the precise impact will depend on future conditions on world markets and on the exchange rate.

Dairy Farming

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the future economic viability of dairy farming in Lancashire. [149937]

Alun Michael: The Government understand the problems that low farmgate prices for milk have caused farmers in Lancashire and in the rest of the UK, and the challenges the dairy sector will face adjusting to the new conditions that will be created by a reformed CAP. While the Government recognise these difficulties, they

also believes that the UK dairy sector has a sustainable future and, in line with their "Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food", will work alongside the industry to facilitate and support its development. The UK has a comparative advantage in terms of climate, farm efficiency and size over many of its competitors. If the dairy supply chain can work together to maximise this potential and address some of the difficulties it faces, then there is no reason why it should not succeed.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average income of dairy farmers in the United Kingdom was in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [148696]

Alun Michael: The average net farm income for dairy farmers in the UK is shown in the table. Net farm income is defined as the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant type capital of the business.

Forecast of dairy incomes in England for the year ending February 2004 will be published on 29 January 2004.

Net income per farm

£

	Current	*In real terms at 2002–03 prices*
1991–92	19,900	26,200
1992–93	27,000	34,500
1993–94	31,100	39,000
1994–95	27,200	33,200
1995–96	33,900	40,000
1996–97	28,000	32,300
1997–98	18,100	20,200
1998–99	10,700	11,600
1999–2000	9,000	9,700
2000–01	13,900	14,400
2001–02	27,900	28,400
2002–03	12,300	12,300

Source:
Farm Business Surveys

Farm Incomes

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the latest figure for the average annual income of hill farmers in England and Wales is. [150058]

Alun Michael: The average net farm income in 2002–03 for hill farmers in England was £17,960. Net farm income is defined as the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant type capital of the business.

Welsh data are a matter for the National Assembly for Wales.

Farming Policy

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on Government policy on the place of *(a)* environmental protection, *(b)* protection of wildlife and *(c)* animal welfare in UK farming policy. [149830]

Alun Michael: The Government are committed to help develop a farming industry which is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. The Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food (SFFS), published in December 2002 sets out how the Government will work with the whole of the food chain to secure a sustainable future for English farming and food industries, as viable industries contributing to a better environment and healthy and prosperous communities.

One of the strategy's key aims is to protect the environment and reward farmers for providing environmental goods. Last year's agreement on CAP reform will help further this objective by removing an incentive to overproduce. In addition, the cross compliance measures to be introduced as part of the agreement will help farmers to reduce damaging environmental impacts by making farm subsidies dependent on meeting good agricultural and environmental conditions. The CAP reform deal also provided for the switching of support from production subsidies to environmental and rural development schemes. In England, we have been running a pilot Entry Level Scheme designed to link key elements of good environmental management across a wider area than the current schemes. Provided that the pilot is successful, the scheme will be made available across England during 2005.

Defra is also carrying out a strategic review of options to reduce diffuse water pollution from agriculture, and will be consulting further on this in the near future.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) provides protection for wildlife and their habitats and sets out comprehensive statutory protection for all species and habitats. All wild birds are afforded statutory protection under the 1981 Act, which fulfils our obligations under the EC Wild Birds Directive. Certain animals and plants are also protected under the 1981 Act. In addition to the protection given to certain animals by the 1981 Act, further protection is also granted to certain species via the Habitats Regulations 1994.

Furthermore, England's Biodiversity Strategy builds on the foundations already laid in conserving habitats and species and aims to go further by ensuring that the implications for wildlife as a whole are considered an integral part of agriculture policy. The strategy encourages the management of farming and agricultural land so as to conserve and enhance biodiversity as part of SFFS.

Also as part of the SFFS, an outline Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain was published for consultation in July 2003. The strategy sets out the direction for animal health and welfare related policy over the next 10 years. It aims to improve the health and welfare of kept animal, and protect public health from animal disease. The strategy is underpinned by the principle of partnership between government and all those involved in and affected by animal health and welfare. It sets out the factors that will help inform Government decisions and the rationale for

Government intervention in animal health and welfare including the need to protect and promote the welfare of animals.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the difference is in *(a)* species and *(b)* size of fish caught between paired trawling and single vessel towing. [150296]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 2003 fishing vessels using single trawl gears caught a much wider range of species than those using pair trawl gears. While both single and pair trawlers caught predominantly more pelagic species, a greater proportion of landings by pair trawlers comprised pelagic species than by single trawlers.

Information on fish sizes is collected for marketing purposes. However since this is recorded as size bands which differ between species, and because the grading of fish is often not recorded, it is not possible given the data available to determine how the size of fish caught differs between the two fishing methods.

Relative percentages of the main species caught by UK fishing vessels using single and pair trawl gears (excluding nephrops gear) in 2003

	Percentage of landings by volume	
Species	*Pair trawls*	*Single trawls*
Mackerel	53	28
Herring	15	17
Haddock	7	6
Blue Whiting	5	11
Sprats	4	1
Pilchards	3	1
Horse Mackerel	3	1
Saithe	3	2
Cod	2	5
Whiting	1	1
Plaice	1	4
Nephrops	1	4
Others	2	19

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at what level in her Department the decision is made to pursue through the criminal courts the prosecution of persons or companies alleged to have committed or suspected of fraudulent activity in matters within the jurisdiction or responsibility of her Department; and whether such decisions are confirmed or reviewed by her or any member of her ministerial team. [150560]

Alun Michael: Decisions to prosecute for fraudulent activity are made in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors (4th Edition) (2000) by prosecution lawyers in the Criminal Advisory and Prosecution Division of the Legal Services Directorate General of the Department. The lawyers are bound by Code for Crown Prosecutors (4th Edition) (2000) and their task is firstly to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to provide a "realistic prospect of conviction" and only then, if there is a realistic prospect of conviction, whether a prosecution is in the public interest.

Such decisions are not confirmed or reviewed by any Ministers although quite properly Ministers are informed of certain high-profile cases and may make representations to the prosecutor.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria are applied by her Department in determining whether to pursue through the criminal courts the prosecution of persons or companies alleged to have committed or suspected of fraudulent activity in matters within the jurisdiction or responsibility of her Department. [150562]

Alun Michael: Decisions to prosecute for fraudulent activity in matters within the jurisdiction or responsibility of the Department are made in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors (4th Edition 2000) by prosecution lawyers in the Criminal Advisory and Prosecution Division of the Legal Services Directorate General of the Department.

The lawyers are bound by Code for Crown Prosecutors (4th Edition) (2000) and their task is firstly to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to provide a "realistic prospect of conviction" and then, only if there is a realistic prospect of conviction, whether a prosecution is in the public interest. In their overall assessment of the public interest in prosecuting such cases, the lawyers take into account all relevant circumstances relating to the commission of the offence including those set out in paragraphs 6.5 (c) to (e) of the Code and the personal circumstances of the offender including those set out in paragraph 6.5 (f) to (h) of the Code.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in her Department. [150930]

Alun Michael: A considerable amount of work is going on in Defra to improve our IT facilities and systems. We are also seeking to improve usage and exploitation of the capacity of the Department's systems in the interests of efficiency and service delivery. It is against that background that the variety of audit mechanisms need to be understood. They are:

1. Departmental audit:

The IT Audit Branch of the Department's own Internal Audit Division conducts a continuous programme of audit assignments (approximately 15–20 per year) in order to provide an assurance concerning the management of our IT systems' (hardware and software) lifecycle—specification, procurement, development, implementation, operations and decommissioning. The scope of audit assignments included in the programme is determined using a risk-based approach and ranges from in-depth examination of single projects or operational systems, to "horizontal" reviews of management processes which can be expected to apply reasonably consistently across projects or systems—for example, software licensing, infrastructure change management, IT governance.

Internal audits contribute to an assurance that hardware and software products are being used properly within the Department, in the sense that projects/systems contribute effectively and efficiently to the achievement of Departmental objectives, are compliant with legal and regulatory requirements,

apply mandated or claimed standards and acknowledged best practice, and are appropriately economical in the use of funds and other resources.

The Department's Security Branch conducts a rolling programme of IT security audits focusing on compliance with Departmental IT Security policies throughout the Defra estate. It also co-ordinates the implementation of BS7799—the British Standard for the Management of Information Security. Internal Audit Division is responsible for independent review of achievement of compliance with this standard.

2. Other internal tools and mechanisms:

There are IT-supported administrative systems in place to assist with the identification and management of IT assets (hardware and software).

A fixed asset inventory is maintained on the Department's Resource Accounting and Management Information System (RAMIS) and holds details of fixed assets valued at £2,000 or more, including IT assets.

The e-Business Directorate holds information about the software installed on our Office Systems network as well as about major server and application development software, and ensures that the correct number of software licences is held. An IT inventory management application is used to identify hardware on Defra's Local Area Networks.

"Audit Logs" recording information concerning users' access to and activity on the Department's IT systems are automatically specified and implemented for all significant IT systems. These are generally for the benefit of system owners in day-to-day management of the system, but may sometimes be used by Internal Audit to examine for signs of improper use of the systems.

3. External audit bodies and mechanisms:

External audit bodies which may examine IT management functions include reviews by NAO, and by EU Audit (where the system/function in question is involved in administration of EU-funded schemes). As with internal audit, external audits of administrative functions may also touch upon IT management issues and may prompt internal audit follow up.

All new major IT-enabled business change programmes within Defra are subject to OGC Gateway Reviews and Health Checks, which examine and report on the management of Programmes, and can also be regarded as a form of external audit.

Ivory

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to ban the import of all ivory products; and if she will make a statement. [150962]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* The EU CITES Regulations, which implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in the European Union, already prohibit trade in products made from wild-taken elephant and narwhal ivory.

Powers are also available:

(a) to control trade in all other ivory products, including pre-convention and antique specimens, by means of a permitting system; and

(b) to suspend the issue of such permits where we consider, on the basis of scientific advice, that the trade would be detrimental to the conservation of the species in the wild.

Mr. Tony: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of imports of mammoth ivory products in each of the last five years. [150960]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* Under the system of classification used by HM Customs and Excise for categorising UK trade in goods it is not possible to distinguish between mammoth ivory and other ivory. The value of UK imports of ivory were as follows:

	£000
1998	20.6
1999	62.7
2000	0.7
2001	0.1
2002	2.7
Jan-Nov 2003	63.5

Note:
Ivory is defined by commodity codes 0507 1000 (unworked) and 9601 1000 (worked) of the Combined Nomenclature.

Lead Content

Mr. Desmond Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 14 January, *Official Report*, column 737W, on lead content, what assessment she has made of the implications for the *(a)* treatment of cathode ray tubes as hazardous waste and *(b)* the cost of their disposal of the readiness with which the lead content leaches. [149452]

Mr. Morley: The draft study being finalised for Defra, referred to in my earlier answer, shows that the lead oxide paste which welds the face plate of a cathode ray tube to its funnel, is prone to leach. Lead bound up within the glass of the cathode ray tube does not leach very readily. Research conducted by the Defra sponsored Market Transformation Programme estimates the cost of disposal for an average television set, after it has been deposited at a public waste disposal facility, to be in the region often pounds.

Medicines/Pharmaceuticals

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many investigations the Environment Agency has undertaken in respect of sites licensed by the Drugs Inspectorate for disposal of medicines and pharmaceuticals. [150437]

Mr. Morley: The disposal of medicines is not licensed as such by the Home Office Drugs Inspectorate. However, the storage of controlled drugs at any site is subject to a Home Office Drugs Inspectorate licence.

The Environment Agency authorises processes for the destruction of wastes such as controlled drugs for disposal. It regularly inspects sites for conformity with the requirements of the authorisation, and investigations may be carried out where breaches of authorisations or other environmental legislation are believed to have taken place, and evidence may be sought in relation to enforcement action. One such major investigation has been carried out.

Additionally, other investigations may relate to technical matters, such as reasons for plant malfunctions, and are carried out as necessary in accordance with the Agency's inspection programmes.

Recycling

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what

recommendations she has made to local authorities for recycling levels of *(a)* domestic refuse, *(b)* commercial refuse and *(c)* industrial refuse. [149957]

Mr. Morley: The Government have set statutory performance standards for local authorities in 2003–04 and 2005–06 for the recycling and composting of household waste. The targets are based on the amount of household waste recycled and composted in 1998–99 and require each authority, on average, to double its recycling and composting rate by 2003–04, and triple it by 2005–06.

Local authorities are not required by law to collect commercial and industrial waste but can do so if asked to by an occupier of premises in their area. The occupier is required to pay the local authority for this service. There is no obligation placed upon local authorities to recycle this waste and, if they do, it will not contribute to their statutory performance standards, which only cover household waste.

Commercial and industrial waste collected by local authorities does, however, fall within the definition of municipal waste and is therefore subject to the Landfill Directive requirements to reduce biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill. All waste disposed of in landfill site is also subject to the Landfill Tax. Both the announced increases in the Landfill Tax to raise it to £35 a tonne in the medium to long-term and the introduction of the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme from 2005, to implement the Landfill Directive requirements, will encourage more recycling.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of *(a)* domestic refuse, *(b)* commercial refuse and *(c)* industrial refuse was recycled in (i) Brent, (ii) London and (iii) England in the last year for which records are available. [149958]

Mr. Morley: The information is as follows:

(a) The most recent year's figures for household waste are found in the Municipal Waste Management Survey for 2001–02.

	Percentage
London borough of Brent	7
London	9.3
England	12.4

(b) and *(c)* The most recent year's figures for commercial waste and for industrial waste are found in the Strategic Waste Management Assessment 2000, published by the Environment Agency, relating to figures for 1998–99. The survey collected data from a sample of 20,000 businesses across England and Wales.

Percentage

	Commercial waste	*Industrial waste*
London borough of Brent	Not collected	Not collected
West London (including Brent)	25.5	29.5
Greater London	30.6	37.6
England	22.5	34

US Vessels (Decommissioning)

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the status is of the four ships from the US ghost fleet sent to the UK for decommissioning. [150029]

Mr. Morley: The four ships are currently being stored at Hartlepool. Conditions attached to the site's waste management licence prevent any dismantling work on the ships. The site is inspected by the Environment Agency on a fortnightly basis.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what explanation she has received from *(a)* the US authorities and *(b)* the US Marine Administration on why warnings given by the Environment Agency on (i) 3 October 2003, (ii) 8 October 2003 and (iii) 10 October 2003 that the four ships from the US ghost fleet should not set out for the UK were not heeded. [150032]

Mr. Morley: Discussions with the US authorities and the US Marine Administration which occurred once the vessels had already left the US concentrated on securing the objectives of safety and environmental protection on the vessels. It was considered that temporary storage in Hartlepool best met those objectives. Consequently, no explanation in relation to warnings has been sought or given.

Warm Front

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households she estimates are eligible for assistance from her Department's Warm Front Scheme; and how many households qualify for the Warm Homes Plus element of the programme. [150085]

Mr. Morley: We are preparing estimates of the number of households currently eligible for assistance under Warm Front as part of the next spending round process.

In addition we will be producing an Implementation Plan on the action required to achieve targets and tackle fuel poverty.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Boxing Day Trading

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will take steps to introduce legislation prohibiting trading on Boxing Day. [149970]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 22 January 2004]*: I have no plans to do so.

Employment Directive

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the Employment Directive improves the work opportunities of older people from disadvantaged groups. [146429]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 12 January 2004]:* We shall bring legislation into force on 1 October 2006 under the Employment Directive outlawing age discrimination in employment and vocational training. Such legislation will improve the work opportunities of older people from all groups. Our consultation on proposals for this legislation ended in October 2003. We shall consult on draft regulations later this year. People who experience discrimination on other grounds will continue to be protected under the relevant current discrimination legislation.

In the meantime the Government encourages employers, through the Code of Practice on Age Diversity in Employment, and the Age Positive campaign, to adopt non-ageist approaches to recruitment, selection, training and development, promotion, redundancy and retirement.

Energy Policy

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average percentage level of availability was for each *(a)* onshore and *(b)* offshore windfarm in the UK in the last year for which figures are available. [R] [147518]

Mr. Timms: Figures for average levels of availability for individual windfarms are not available for reasons of commercial confidentiality. However the most recent figures available show an average load factor of all UK windfarms as being 29.9 per cent. in 2002.

Separate figures for offshore windfarms are not yet available as UK's first major offshore windfarm at North Hoyle has only been operational since November last year. However, we would expect average load factors to be greater due to the superior offshore wind resource.

Source:
DUKES 2003 available on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy-stats/renewables/index.shtml. Data for 2003 will become available in June 2003.

Enterprise Act

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what powers were introduced by the Enterprise Act 2002. [148898]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The main provisions of the Enterprise Act 2002 are:

Office of Fair Trading

The Act establishes the OFT on a statutory basis as a corporate body. The Act provides the OFT with a number of new powers, including the following:

power to compel persons to answer questions or otherwise provide information or documents relevant to an investigation;

powers of surveillance, in accordance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000;

power to apply to court for orders disqualifying directors of companies which have committed a breach of competition law;

power to enter premises under a warrant.

Competition Measures

expert, independent, competition bodies take decisions on mergers and markets against a new competition-based test within a more transparent, predictable and accountable framework;

there is a new right of appeal to the Competition Appeals Tribunals in merger and market inquiries;

there are rules for the conduct of the Competition Commission's inquiries allowing for a more transparent remedies-setting phase;

criminal sanctions with a maximum penalty of five years in prison to deter those individuals who dishonestly operate hardcore cartels—agreements to fix prices, share markets, limit production and rig bids;

there are greater opportunities to gain redress for victims of anti-competitive behaviour, consumer bodies who are able to make claims on behalf of individuals who have suffered.

Consumer Protection Measures

the Stop Now Orders regime has been extended to protect consumers from traders who do not meet their legal obligations;

the OFT is able to give formal approval to codes of practice;

consumer bodies are able to make 'super-complaints' to the OFT.

Insolvency Reforms

The Crown's preferential right to recover unpaid taxes ahead of other creditors have been abolished;

reform of corporate insolvency law and a streamlining of administration;

a new Bankruptcy Restrictions Order regime has been introduced;

the financial regime of the Insolvency Service has been modernised.

Estate Agent Ombudsman Scheme

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations she has received on the operation of the Estate Agent Ombudsman scheme; and if she will make a statement. [150881]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. I expect the OFT to publish its report on estate agents shortly. I will study the recommendations carefully.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many young people in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK have entered the manufacturing industry following school in each year since 1997; [145121]

(2) how many young people in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK have been employed in the manufacturing industry in each year since 1997. [145122]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from J. Pullinger to Mr. Stephen Hepburn, dated 29 January 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about young people employed in the manufacturing industry. I am replying in his absence. (145121 and 145122)

The attached table gives estimates of the number of people aged 16 to 24 resident in the United Kingdom and the North East region employed in the manufacturing industry, for the twelve month period ending November of each year from 1997 to 2003.

These estimates are from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS sample size is too small to give reliable estimates for South Tyneside or the Jarrow Parliamentary Constituency.

Although the LFS can provide some retrospective information, its principal focus is on the current labour market status of people when they are interviewed. No estimates of young people who left school to enter manufacturing industry are available.

As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

Young people[1] employed in the manufacturing industry[2] by area of residence

Thousand

12-month period ending November	*United Kingdom*	*North East*
1997	679	33
1998	654	32
1999	604	29
2000	537	27
2001	530	24
2002	502	22
2003	447	20

[1] People aged 16–24

[2] People whose main job is in Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 1992 Division D: Manufacturing

Note:

These LFS estimates have not been adjusted to reflect the 2001 Census results.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Ling Dynamics Ltd.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the letters of 13 November 2003 and 15 December 2003 from the hon. Member for North-East Hertfordshire on her Department's relationship with Ling Dynamics Ltd. of Royston. [150357]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Following his letter of 13 November, the hon. Member will recall that I telephoned him to discuss his constituent's concerns. The hon. Member will also recall that, in early 2003, we both met with Mr. Williams to discuss various export control-related issues. We are well aware of the difficulties that Mr. Williams of Ling Dynamics Ltd. has been facing and are doing as much as we can to assist him.

Miners Compensation

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what mechanisms are in place to ensure that miners' compensation claims for respiratory diseases are settled within a reasonable period of time. [149914]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department and our contractors are doing all we can to speed up the process for respiratory disease claims.

The company currently contracted to provide the Medical Assessment Process (MAP), Schlumberger, have recruited 250 respiratory specialists to work on this scheme. This represents 40 per cent. of those available in the UK.

To enable the medical assessments to be converted in to offers, IRISC, the Department's claim handlers, have increased their staff from 160 in November 1999 to around 1,150 at present.

To assist solicitors in turning round these offers, we have re-launched our website—www.coalclaims.com—where-solicitors are able to send in forms electronically and agree aspects of the claim online, particularly employment histories. Solicitors can also identify from the website their highest priority claims so they can better target their efforts on those cases that are most important.

The Department has received nearly 400,000 claims so far. We have made some 167,000 individual payments and settled 110,000 claims, totalling £959 million.

Note:

The Handling Agreement was approved by the judges concerned who still preside over the process of paying out the compensation. The Department and the claimants' solicitors are required to report back to the judge on progress three to four times a year. The next hearing is 3 February 2004.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley have benefited from the minimum wage since its introduction. [149165]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is not possible to provide estimates specifically for Lancashire or Chorley. However based on the Office for National Statistics' low pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that around 140,000 people in the north west stood to benefit from the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999.

The DTI estimates that between 130,000 and 160,000 people in the north west benefited from the increase in minimum wage rates in October 2003.

National Power Provision

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the capacity of the national power grid is. [151264]

Mr. Timms: Figures published in National Grid Transco's Seven Year Statement of March 2003 show that the capacity of the England and Wales transmission system is 69.1 GW.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the projected demand for power is in the United Kingdom over the next 25 years; and what steps she is taking to ensure that this demand is met. [151265]

Mr. Timms: The latest provisional DTI energy projections which update those in Energy Paper 68 available in the Libraries of the House, project a demand of 375TWh in 2005, 385TWh in 2010, 386TWh in 2015 and 399TWh in 2020. The projections relate to gross supply to the grid and cover all major power producers and renewable generators and exclude the effect of a number of climate change programme measures whose exact impact had not been estimated at the time of publication.

The Government attach great importance to reliable energy supplies—reliable supply is one of the four goals of energy policy as set out the Government's Energy White Paper, published in February of last year.

We believe that a market based approach for provision of electricity generation will work. But if the market is to work it needs confidence that Government will not intervene. We have said we will not intervene in the market except in extreme circumstances, to protect safety, and that remains our position.

Through the Joint Energy Security of Supply working group (JESS), we and Ofgem continually monitor developments in the gas and electricity markets over the medium to long term and look for ways to improve the operation of the market. The latest JESS report was published on 12 November and copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Public Bodies (Membership)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the members of the *(a)* National Consumer Council, *(b)* Welsh Consumer Council, *(c)* Scottish Consumer Council, *(d)* Hearing Aid Council and *(e)* Gas Consumer Council were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151289]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The information requested is as follows:

Name	*Appointment ends*	*Remuneration (£)*
(a) National Consumer Council		
Deirdre Hutton (Chair)	31 December 2006	48,567
Robert Chilton (Vice-Chair)	30 September 2004	13,100
Graeme Millar (Member and SCC Chair)	30 April 2006	10,481
Vivienne Sugar (Member and WCC Chair)	31 March 2007	10,481
Stephen Costello (Member and GCCNI Chair)	31 December 2005	10,481
Mark Boleat (Member)	31 December 2005	10,481
Andrew Dilnot (Member)	30 June 2008	10,481
Dianne Hayter (Member)	30 September 2004	10,481
Sir Christopher Kelly (Member)	30 September 2004	10,481
Stephen Locke (Member)	30 September 2004	10,481
Julie Mellor (Member)	30 September 2004	10,481
Julia Unwin (Member)	30 September 2004	10,481
(b) Welsh Consumer Council		
Viv Sugar (Chair)	31 March 2007	6,902
Heather Coates (Member)	30 September 2004	100 per day
Stephen Delahaye (Member)	30 September 2004	100 per day
Carys Evans (Member)	30 September 2004	100 per day
Geralit Hughes	30 September 2004	100 per day
Chris Neary	30 September 2004	100 per day
Anne Morgan	30 September2004	100 per day
Thelma Parry	30 September 2005	100 per day
(c) Scottish Consumer Council		
Graeme Millar	30 April 2006	16,192
Heather Brash	31 October 2007	100 per day
Ann Clark	31 May 2006	100 per day
Neil Edwards	31 May 2006	100 per day
John Hanlon	31 May 2006	100 per day
Kay Blair	31 May 2008	100 per day
Liz Breckinridge	31 May 2008	100 per day
Peter Hunter	31 May 2008	100 per day
Alan Hutton	31 May 2008	100 per day
Adriene Kelbie	31 May 2008	100 per day
Ashok Khindrea	31 May 2008	100 per day
Isabelle Low	31 May 2008	100 per day
Mukami McCrum	31 May 2008	100 per day
Drew Ratter	31 May 2008	100 per day
(d) The Hearing Aid Council		
Christopher Hughes (Chair)	31 August 2006	189.50 per day (max 50 days)
Christine Pearce	31 December 2004	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Deepak Prasher	31 December 2004	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Victoria Skeels	31 December 2004	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Jonathan Ormerod	31 December 2004	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Maurice Hawthorne	31 December 2005	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Mark Geogevic	31 December 2005	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Margaret Hughes	31 December 2005	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Denise Yates	31 December 2005	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Huw Thomas	31 December 2006	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
John Irwin	31 December 2006	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Peter Ormerod	31 December 2006	189.50 per day (max 25 days)
Anthony Corcoran	31 December 2006	189.50 per day (max 25 days)

(e) Gas and Electricity Consumer Council1

Name	Appointment ends	Remuneration (£)
Andrew Horsler (Acting Chair)	31 March 2005	33,324 (as acting chair)
John Hanlon	31 March 2005	10,796
Bob Wilkinson	31 March 2005	10,796
Tim Cole	31 March 2005	7,556
Sharon Darcy	31 March 2005	7,556
Neil Menzies	31 March 2005	7,556
Les Roberts	31 March 2005	7,556

[1] Following the passage of the Utilities Act 2000, the Gas Consumers' Council and the Electricity Consumers' Committees of the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) were abolished in November 2000, and replaced by the Gas and Electricity Consumer Council (GECC).

Note:

The GECC's Chief Executive, Allan Asher, is also a member of the Council.

Sellafield (MOX Facility)

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the current operational status of the MOX demonstration facility at Sellafield is; and if she will make a statement. [149533]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Since February 2002, in accordance with a licence issued by Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII), BNFL has operated the MOX Demonstration Facility (MDF) as a support facility to the Sellafield MOX Plant (SMP).

Supermarket Code of Practice

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Government will publish the report of the Office of Fair Trading inquiry into the operation of the voluntary Supermarket Code of Practice. [150986]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is expected to conclude its review of the Code of Practice governing supermarkets' relations with their suppliers shortly. The OFT will then send its report to DTI for formal consideration. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry will then decide if any action is necessary and publish the report.

TETRA Masts

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with Scottish Executive Ministers about TETRA masts. [151792]

Mr. Timms: Neither I nor my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry have had discussions with Scottish Ministers on the subject.

Transport of Nuclear Fuel (Essex)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what measures she has taken to protect trains carrying nuclear fuel and spent nuclear fuel through Essex from terrorist attack; [150523]

(2) what assessment she has made of the vulnerability to terrorist attack of trains travelling through Essex carrying nuclear fuel and spent nuclear fuel; [150524]

Mr. Timms: The transport of nuclear fuel strictly adheres to the stringent international and national regulations that govern such movements. In the UK security for the transportation of nuclear material is regulated by the Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS). OCNS is kept fully briefed about terrorist threat intelligence and in turn keeps security arrangements under review at all times. It is not Government policy to disclose details of security measures or nuclear fuel movements, which may be of potential use to terrorists.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many trains per month travel in Essex carrying *(a)* nuclear fuel and *(b)* spent nuclear fuel. [150525]

Mr. Timms: On average the movement of flasks containing spent nuclear fuel through Essex amounts to 12 separate rail movements per month. There are no fresh fuel movements currently through Essex by rail.

World Trade Organisation

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which members of the World Trade Organisation have still to implement fully the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Basic Telecommunications. [149080]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The WTO agreement on basic telecommunications came into effect on 5 February 1998. To date, 70 WTO members have adopted the agreement. The nature of the GATS agreement means that members are free to choose the pace and extent of any commitments they wish to make.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her policy is on admitting Russia to the World Trade Organisation; and if she will make a statement. [151251]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The Government supports Russian membership of the WTO, on the right terms, as both in our interests and in the interests of Russian economic development. We support the negotiating position taken by the European Commission on behalf of the EU, and we call upon the Russian Government to respond positively to the points raised by the Commission on our behalf. We also call upon the Russian Government to address the issues that have been identified by their WTO Accession Working Party as material to the readiness and ability of Russia to implement WTO rules upon accession. Since December 2000, the UK has provided £1.2 million worth of technical assistance to Russia to support their efforts to accede to the WTO.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Queen (Diamond Jubilee)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) if the Government will make arrangements for a Diamond Jubilee Baton Relay should London host the 2012 Olympics; [149929]

(2) what plans she has to link the 2012 Olympic Games bid to the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee; [150391]

(3) if she will recommend to the organisers of the London 2012 Olympic bid that they place more emphasis in their bid on the fact that 2012 will also be the Diamond Jubilee. [150392]

Tessa Jowell: The Government and the bid company, London 2012, are fully aware that it would be a momentous occasion to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in the same year as Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Some of the events to celebrate the Golden Jubilee were successfully integrated into the staging of the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games. It is too early to consider what specific celebrations will mark the Diamond Jubilee but London 2012 will consider what links could be made should we stage the Games. The IOC will select the host city on 6 July 2005.

DEFENCE

Airfield Support Service Project

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Airfield Support Service Project; when it was put out to tender; how many times bidders have been asked to resubmit their bids; what the projected date for conclusion of the bidding process was; when it will take place; and when the public sector comparator was finalised. [149056]

Mr. Ingram: The Airfield Support Services Project tender was issued on 20 September 2001.

Since receipt of their responses in April 2002, bidders have been requested to review their prices on three occasions—in December 2002, May 2003 and September 2003.

The original projected date for conclusion of the bidding process (Contract Let) was October 2003. The latest revised programme is mid-2004.

The Public Sector Comparator was originally set in September 2001 and communicated to bidders in November 2001. Since then there have been two revisions, which were advised to bidders in March 2002 and February 2003.

Colchester Garrison

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on proposals for the building of the new garrison at Colchester; what has caused delays; and when he expects work to start. [151784]

Mr. Ingram: The project to redevelop Colchester Garrison and to provide facilities management for the site has been complex to negotiate. It is very important to our people that we secure these much needed improvements to the Garrison and we have been working hard with our preferred bidder, RMPA to resolve all outstanding issues. I expect to make an announcement on the project in the very near future.

Procurement (Outsourcing)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's procurement policy with regard to offshore IT and call centre outsourcing; whether his Department is outsourcing IT and call centre jobs to offshore companies; to which countries his Department has outsourced these jobs; how much his Department has spent on this outsourcing in each of the last two years; and how much has been budgeted for this purpose for the next two years. [147586]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Connarty) on 29 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 220W.

Remembrance Day

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the laying of wreaths on Remembrance Day at the graves of Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers on behalf of the Royal Irish Regiment. [151613]

Mr. Caplin: There is no official policy regarding the laying of wreaths on behalf of the Royal Irish Regiment on the graves of fallen soldiers from antecedent regiments. However, this does not prevent Royal Irish Regiment battalions from carrying out individual acts of remembrance at the discretion of the Commanding Officer and where resources and appropriate personnel are available. Where it is not possible to carry on such acts and where Regimental Associations consider that a requirement still exists, the Royal Irish Regiment would encourage the respective associations to take on and carry on the tradition.

Reservists

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what restrictions apply to the renewed call-up of a reservist who has completed a six-month operational deployment; and what time must elapse before he or she can be called up again. [150863]

Mr. Caplin: The Reserve Forces Act 1996 (RFA 96) sets specific limits for mobilised Service under different call-out orders. Under a section 52 call-out order (national danger, great emergency or attack on the UK), reservists may serve for a total of three years in five; under section 54 (warlike operations), reservists may serve for a total of one year in three; and under section 56 (essentially peacekeeping and disaster relief), reservists may serve for a total of nine months in 27.

Once mobilised, and subject to the needs of the Services and their Commanding Officer's approval, it is possible for a reservist to volunteer to extend their

mobilised Service beyond the limits set by RFA 96; usually for six months at a time. However, there are normally theatre specific limits to the period a reservist can serve. This is to ensure that no one serves too long in an operational environment.

Once demobilised, it is possible to call-out a reservist immediately, provided he has enough mobilised service available. However, in general we would not do so unless there were overriding operational reasons.

Sea King Helicopters

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conclusions have been reached by his Department's review of the investigation into the collision of two UK Sea King helicopters, from RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall, off Iraq on 22 March 2003; what the implications were of the non-availability of night vision goggles for the pilots; and if he will make a statement. [150198]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* A Board of Inquiry into the circumstances leading to the collision of the two Sea Kings from 849 Naval Air Squadron on 22 March 2003, was completed last November. The purpose of the Board of Inquiry was:

to establish the facts surrounding the incident;

to discover whether there were any shortcomings in Service equipment or procedures which either caused or contributed to the incident; and

where necessary, to make recommendations.

The BOI concluded that:

Both aircraft had reported visual contact with each other, but apparently lost situational awareness and collided. The aircraft were responsible for their own safety at the time of collision.

Following the BOI operating procedures are being reviewed.

A full technical investigation by the Royal Navy Flight Safety and Accident Investigation Centre is still under way, and the report of its findings is not expected for some time.

Helicopter flight safety is achieved through a number of measures including air traffic control, radar detection of hazards, communications, lighting and lookout. Night Vision Goggles (NVG) can, in certain circumstances, enhance these capabilities. However, NVG can be operated only in aircraft that have been specifically modified for this role and from compatible ships. Naval helicopters are fitted to allow operation with NVG according to their tactical role in operations. The operational role for the helicopters of 849 Naval Air Squadron involved in Operation Telic did not require the modifications to the helicopters that are necessary for the provision of NVG. We are currently considering whether to adopt as policy a fleet-wide NVG capability.

The next of kin have been informed of the outcome of the BOI.

UK Nuclear Weapons Tests

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps have been taken to categorise into sub-groups by *(a)* operational activity and *(b)* incident those covered by the National Radiological Protection Board study of participants in UK nuclear weapons tests. [150844]

Mr. Caplin: The results of the epidemiological studies published by the National Radiological Protection Board have been presented in terms of mortality for all types of cancer, cancer incidence and risk relative to a comparison group within the following sub-categories: *(a)* by operation; *(b)* for participants with a recorded radiation dose as well as monitored participants with no recorded radiation dose (with information provided on the relative risks for these categories plus an analysis for any trend in mortality or cancer incidence for those with a recorded radiation dose); *(c)* personnel identified by MOD as liable to exposure to radiation (for example those aircrew involved in sampling radioactive clouds); and *(d)* personnel directly involved in the minor trials at Maralinga.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what funding has been granted to the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association to commission scientific advice on the epidemiology of exposure to nuclear tests. [150845]

Mr. Caplin: To date no funding has been granted to the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA) for purposes of commissioning scientific advice. The three independent studies by the National Radiological Protection Board into mortality and cancer incidence among nuclear test veterans were commissioned and funded by the Ministry of Defence.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Brent Housing Partnership

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of Brent Housing Partnership homes are fitted with *(a)* smoke alarms, *(b)* fire doors and *(c)* double glazing. [150815]

Keith Hill: This is primarily a matter for Brent Housing Partnership (BHP), the Arms Length Management Organisation that manages 13,500 tenanted and leasehold homes owned by the London Borough of Brent. BHP reports that 34 per cent. of these homes now have smoke alarms, 23 per cent. have double glazing, and that planned works will increase these figures to 80 per cent. by April 2006 and 32 per cent. by September 2004 respectively. The hon. Member may wish to contact BHP to discuss the information she requires on fire doors.

Council Tax

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage increase in council tax he considers to be profligate; and how he defines low single figure percentage increases. [150135]

Mr. Raynsford: With the significant extra investment we have put into local government and the scope for efficiency improvements, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's view is that local authorities can and should deliver council tax increases in low single figures in 2004–05. It would not be appropriate for the

Government to specify a figure at this time. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not want to use its powers to cap local authority budgets but is prepared to use them, if necessary, to protect council taxpayers from excessive council tax rises.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his regionalisation agenda for the Fire and Rescue Service envisages a single control room for all Fire Brigades in each region. [149360]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government accept the conclusions of the Mott MacDonald report, on the "Future of Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms in England and Wales", published in December 2003. It believes that control rooms at regional level are appropriate for reasons of governance, resilience and intra-service working. It is seeking the views of the Practitioners' Forum, authorities and the service on the conclusions of the report and the Government's response. Copies of the report are available in the Library of the House.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely change in demand for gypsy and traveller sites following the admission to the EU of the accession states on 1 May. [151065]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not made an assessment of the likely change in demand for gypsy and traveller sites following the admission to the EU of the accession states on 1 May.

Research undertaken by the Home Office on migration flows into the UK after enlargement concluded that there would not be a significant increase from current levels.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will keep the issue of the possible demand for additional sites in mind while it reviews its policies on gypsy and traveller site provision, which is due to report to Ministers in the summer.

Housing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the availability of affordable housing in each of the Lancashire districts; and what plans he has to increase availability. [151203]

Keith Hill: This is a matter for local assessment. National planning advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 "Housing" (PPG3) makes it clear that each local authority should assess the local need for affordable housing within its area.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has published for consultation proposed changes to the current policies for affordable housing set out in PPG3 and in Circular 6/98, 'Planning for Affordable Housing'. They include allowing local authorities to seek affordable housing on smaller sites where this is justified. The proposed changes are designed to help deliver more affordable housing where it is needed, and deliver a better match between a community's housing needs and supply.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it is the Government's policy that the proposals for elected regional assemblies will not involve any review of the Barnett formula. [150078]

Mr. Raynsford: There are no plans to review the Barnett formula as a result of elected regional assemblies. The Government keeps all aspects of public spending under review, with allocations to the devolved administrations and the details of the Barnett formula updated in the spending review process in the normal way.

Robson Rhodes Review

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on when the Robson Rhodes review on the operation of supporting people is expected to report. [151787]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have received the report on the independent review and are considering their recommendations carefully. The Government will publish the report and announce their response shortly.

TETRA Masts

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines have been issued by his Department on the siting of TETRA masts. [151794]

Keith Hill: Current planning guidance for all electronic communication developments is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also issued a Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150269]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The information requested is as follows.

Staff numbers by grade

Grade	*1 April 1997*[1]	*1 October 2003*[1]
SMS	450	474
D7	85	194
D6	581	702
C5	362	565
C4	1,081	1,260
B3	1,490	1,323
A2	1,327	1,188
Al	236	351
Total	5,612	6,057

[1] Includes Wilton Park.

EU Directives

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many directives that should have been transposed into national law have not yet been transposed in *(a)* France and *(b)* Germany. [151488]

Mr. MacShane: The European Commission recently reported that France had transposed 97.41 per cent. and Germany 97.33 per cent. of directives that were due for implementation by 31 December 2003.

The European Commission report is available on the European Union website: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/droit_com/pdf/mne_country_2003123l_en.pdf

European Union

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what mid-term Lisbon process targets the European Union has said it will *(a)* meet and *(b)* miss; and if he will make a statement. [151343]

Mr. MacShane: The hon. Gentlemen will be interested in the European Commission's "Delivering Lisbon'" report, published on 21 January—copies have been placed in the Library of the House. The report notes that although the EU has made some progress in job creation, market liberalisation and creation of a knowledge-based economy, there remains considerable work to be done if the EU is to meet its 2010 goal of becoming the most dynamic economy in the world. The Commission notes that the 2005 mid-term employment targets are likely lo be missed and it therefore urges member states to reinvigorate their commitment to the Lisbon reform agenda. The UK Government support this aim and will be looking to the March 25–26 European Council to provide this impetus.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the entry requirements are for visitors to the Falkland Islands; what visa restrictions are in place; to residents of which countries they apply; and what procedures are in place for those arriving without the correct documentation. [151644]

Mr. Straw: Entry requirements for visitors to the Falkland Islands are the responsibility of the Falkland Islands Government and are implemented by the Falkland Islands Immigration Service.

All visitors must have a valid passport. A valid visa is also required except by citizens of the UK, USA, Chile, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, San Marino, Andorra, Vatican City and countries of the European Community, the EEA, Mercosur and the Commonwealth. Transit passengers do not require a visa if they are continuing their journey immediately. Tourists are required to demonstrate on arrival that they have onward travel arrangements, accommodation and sufficient funds for their visit.

A visa national arriving without a valid visa may apply for a visa at the airport on arrival. Individuals arriving without a valid passport would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Liberia

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping force in Liberia; and if he will make a statement. [151201]

Mr. Mullin: The UN peacekeeping force in Liberia (UNMIL) currently consists of 9,000 troops, increasing to 15,000 by the end of March 2004, UNMIL initially deployed to Monrovia and its immediate surrounds. As numbers increase the force is extending its reach throughout the country. UNMIL is responsible for the disarmament and demobilisation process. It has collected about 9,000 weapons; is constructing three cantonment camps; and is sensitising ex-combatants towards the peace process. It is also actively involved in humanitarian relief and has made several valuable interventions to protect Liberian citizens.

Overseas Bribery and Corruption

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guidance diplomatic posts offer to UK companies about the use of agents and intermediaries. [151387]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: UK Trade and Investment, which operates overseas through UK Diplomatic posts, offers guidance as appropriate on agents and intermediaries in overseas markets. Guidance varies according to the circumstances of the local market or sector. Examples of advice can be viewed on the Sectors and Markets area of UK Trade and Investment's public website: www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

Road Map

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had within the last six weeks with the representatives of the *(a)* US Administration, *(b)* Russian Government and *(c)* EU in relation to progress on the Middle East Road Map; and if he will make a statement. [151162]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* In the last six weeks or so, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has discussed progress on the roadmap for peace in the Middle East with President Bush, President Putin and with EU leaders at the European Council in Brussels. In the same period my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has discussed this issue with US Secretary of State Colin Powell and EU Foreign Ministers. Most recently my noble Friend the Baroness

Symons of Vernham Dean has discussed these issues with Marc Otte, the EU representation on the Middle East on 27 January.

The Government are committed to progress towards peace in the Middle East based on the Quartet's roadmap. We have been disappointed by the lack of progress on Phase One of the roadmap. Israel should implement a settlement freeze and remove the settlement outposts erected since March 2001. The Palestinian Authority should undertake sustained, targeted and effective operations against terrorists.

Singapore (Death Penalty)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Singaporean Government in relation to the use of the death penalty in that country. [151329]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised this issue during a meeting with his counterpart in Singapore on 8 January 2003. He stated the United Kingdom's opposition to the use of the death penalty and explained our experience of using long custodial sentences as an alternative. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Director General (Economic) also drew attention to the UK position when he met the Permanent Under Secretary of the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 4 March 2003.

South Africa

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials from his Department met the former South African Defence Minister, Mr. Joe Modise, when he visited the UK during 1998; and whether his Department was informed of the visit and its purpose. [151389]

Mr. Mullin: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has no record of Mr. Joe Modise visiting the UK in 1998.

PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Minutes

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Prime Minister whether recordings are kept of telephone conversations to and from 10 Downing street. [151615]

The Prime Minister: Telephone conversations to and from Downing street are not recorded.

Prisoners (Egypt)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 50W, on prisoners (Egypt), if he will meet President Mubarak to discuss the case of the three detainees held in prison in Cairo. [151861]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so.

I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave him on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 50W.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Clergy Terms of Service

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will make a statement on the first report of the McClean Review on clergy terms of service. [151117]

Sir Stuart Bell: The McClean report was published on 23 January and will be debated by the General Synod on 12 February. Subject to the views of Synod, the Report will then be the subject of consultation throughout the Church.

It recommends conferring through Church legislation a new package of rights and responsibilities for clergy. This will include: access to Employment Tribunals to claim unfair dismissal (at the same time as retaining the office holder status of clergy); legal entitlement to the rights covered by section 23 of the Employment Relations Act (except for the right not to work on Sundays); a new form of tenure, known as common tenure under which appointments for clergy without the freehold would normally be made until retirement; new Clergy Terms of Service Regulations which would clarify the responsibilities of clergy on a national basis; and a capability procedure to be invoked where clergy are failing to reach minimum standards.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Arms Trade Treaty

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what response he has made to the recent representations from international charities about an international arms trade treaty. [151118]

Hilary Benn: I wrote to Oxfam, Amnesty International and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) on 18 October, welcoming the launch of the Arms Trade Treaty as a useful contribution to the international debate on arms issues. The UK supports the goal of an international instrument on arms transfers, although to be effective any such measure would have to enjoy the support of all major arms exporting countries.

The UK Government are working to promote tougher controls on arms exports at an international level. In January 2003, DFID, FCO and MOD hosted a conference at Lancaster House on strengthening international controls on arms exports. The UK organised a meeting during the July UN Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, which sought to follow up on the Lancaster House conference.

These consultations suggest that there are many areas of common ground and significant political will among States. They also demonstrate that more needs to be done before we can secure a universal commitment to strengthening export controls.

In the next two years the UK will continue to call for international controls and support a series of regional meetings, to build consensus on the need for common, harmonised controls. We hope that if there is sufficient support at the regional level, then an international agreement could be reached by the 2006 UN Review

Conference on Small Arms. Although the draft Arms Trade Treaty covers all arms, not just Small Arms and Light Weapons, many of its principles are similar to those we are promoting as part of the UK initiative on strengthening transfer controls.

Between 2001 and 2004, the UK is providing over £20 million to programmes targeted at controlling the supply, demand and availability of arms.

Colombia

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has held with the UN High Commission for Human Rights about the future of the Commission's office in Colombia. [151225]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Neither the Secretary of State nor myself have personally spoken to the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR) about this, but officials in DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office keep in close contact with their work in Colombia.

Global Health Fund

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much of the $200 million pledged by the Government to the Global Health Fund over five years has been disbursed. [149976]

Hilary Benn: The UK has pledged an additional US$80 million to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). This will bring our total contribution to US$280 million and extend our current funding commitment to 2008.

To date, the UK has disbursed £75million to the GFATM, or approximately US$120 million.

South Africa

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the underlying cause of the 50 per cent. rise in basic service prices in South Africa; and what is being done to remedy this. [150344]

Hilary Benn: It is difficult to make an overall assessment of the rise in prices of basic services in South Africa. The latest consumer price index figures published by Statistics South Africa suggest that overall inflation was 4.8 per cent. for the year to November 2003, while the price of fuel and power in urban areas rose over the same period by 6.8 per cent.

The Government of South Africa is committed to providing free basic services to the poor. The Free Basic Water policy entitles poor households to 6,000 litres of water each month, and the Free Basic Electricity policy to 50 kilowatt hours of electricity each month, free of charge. Poor households must pay for their use of services above these thresholds.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department has provided to South Africa broken down by *(a)* programme type, *(b)* programme name and *(c)* funding provided in each of the last six years. [151286]

Hilary Benn: DFID's assistance to South Africa over the last six financial years has totalled:

000s

Financial Year	*Number*
1997–98	25,549
1998–99	28,858
1999–2000	29,557
2000–01	30,115
2001–02	25,485
2002–03	36,435

I will write to the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington with a list of the programmes which make up this total.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research his Department have *(a)* conducted and *(b)* commissioned into numbers of (i) pharmacists, (ii) doctors and (iii) nurses in South Africa; and what assessment he has made of South Africa's ability to implement its plan to distribute anti-retroviral AIDS drugs to its HIV-positive citizens. [151284]

Hilary Benn: DFID have not commissioned or conducted any such research. The South African Government's plan for the comprehensive care, management and treatment of HIV/AIDS envisages that anti-retroviral drugs will be introduced progressively, with all who need them having access within five years. The plan takes into account the need to train additional health professionals. DFID are in discussion with the Government of South Africa about how the UK can best support the implementation of the plan.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department has provided to fighting HIV/AIDS in South Africa broken down by *(a)* programme type, *(b)* programme name and *(c)* funding provided in each of the last six years. [151285]

Hilary Benn: DFID's assistance for HIV/AIDS in South Africa over the last six financial years has totalled:

000s

Financial Year	*Number*
1997–98	1,925
1998–99	3,056
1999–2000	3,088
2000–01	4,345
2001–02	4,442
2002–03	8,758

I will write to the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington with a list of the programmes which make up this total.

UK Aid

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the Department's bilateral aid projects which have been evaluated as successful; and if he will publish the most recent criteria. [149193]

Hilary Benn: All DFID projects and programmes,

which are at least two years old and have a commitment value of £1 million and over, are reviewed annually and scored on likely success. The outcome of the review is recorded on DFID's central Performance Reporting Information System (PRISM), and is used to track DFID's performance against its Public Service Agreement (PSA) Value for Money Target.

The success rating consists of a 5-point scoring system ranging from 1 ('Likely to be "Completely" achieved') and 2 ('Likely to be "Largely" achieved') to 5 ('"Unlikely" to be realised'). In the context of the PSA, successful projects are those that have been scored as 1 or 2. Projects scored 3 ('projects likely to be "partially" achieved') are not counted when measuring progress against our PSA target. However, they will also include a range of successful outcomes. Projects are disaggregated by risk.

The following table shows the total number and proportion by commitment value of bilateral projects of £1 million and over that were reviewed as scoring 1 or 2 in calendar year 2003 (broken down by geographical region and risk category).

Value for money divisional breakdown for calendar year 2003

	High		*Medium*		*Low*	
Risk category	*Number of projects*	*Percentage of commitment value*	*Number of projects*	*Percentage of commitment value*	*Number of projects*	*Percentage of commitment value*
Africa	30	34	188	48	80	85
Asia	30	14	125	62	69	79
Europe, Middle East and Americas	23	66	108	67	58	67
Others	6	94	67	55	76	63

A list detailing the individual projects of £1 million and over covered in the table has been placed in the Library of the House, entitled 'Projects in 2003'. The project list is broken down by DFID department and region.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Speeding

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the net figure remitted to the Home Office in respect of speeding fines raised by police forces in England and Wales was in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [150018]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

All fines for speeding offences are paid to the courts. Some revenue from speeding fines resulting from safety camera activity is netted off and returned to local authorities and police forces within safety camera partnerships for the operation of approved safety cameras. The balance is passed to the Consolidated Fund and none are passed to Government Departments.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Expert Witnesses

Tim Loughton: To ask the Solicitor-General (1) if she will list experts who *(a)* are currently and *(b)* have been in the last 10 years on the official list of expert witnesses for cases related to harm of children by their parents or carers; [151030]

(2) how long Sir Roy Meadow has been included on the official list of expert witnesses; [151031]

(3) what the procedure is for *(a)* including, *(b)* removing and *(c)* reviewing the appropriateness of continued inclusion of individuals on the official list of expert witnesses. [151032]

Tim Loughton: To ask the Solicitor-General what requirements were placed on Sir Roy Meadow in his capacity as an expert witness for the prosecution in criminal and civil cases to retain his notes for those cases after guilty verdicts have been secured. [151027]

The Solicitor-General: There are no specific requirements for the retention of personal notes following either a criminal or civil trial. Experts may be required to annex their original reports to a statement in order to explain their findings. There is also a statutory duty on expert witnesses to ensure that any information, which may undermine the prosecution's case, is disclosed.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health does not issue guidance to practitioners on retention of data. However, there is a professional duty upon all expert witnesses to consider carefully the possible use to which notes and records may be required in the future, for example possible appeals.

The Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners is implementing a system of registration of forensics practitioners. Each expert will be bound by a code of practice which will require practitioners to retain their work in order that it can be reviewed if necessary at a later date by another member of the Council.

The Intercollegiate Working Group chaired by Baroness Kennedy is examining issues surrounding the provision of training for expert witnesses and their use in the investigation process. The Group will report its findings in the Spring.

The Solicitor-General: There is no single official list of persons considered expert witnesses. Various organisations and bodies hold lists of expert witnesses for the purpose of assisting both their own members and other bodies which may require the assistance of an expert. The National Crime and Operations Faculty of the police force retains a database of persons with expertise in a wide range of areas, which is available to other law enforcement agencies. Other similar databases

include those held by the Law Society, which retains a database for the use of its members. The Home Office retains a database of pathologists, registered to conduct post mortems on behalf of police or coroners. The Crown Prosecution Service does not retain a central database of experts. Some CPS Areas do keep a list of suitable experts for use in cases.

The National Crime and Operations Faculty (NCOF) and its database have been in existence since 1997. It currently retains details on a wide range of experts, both medical and non-medical, which is used by police forces, security services and the Crown Prosecution Service.

The various bodies maintaining a database will each have different methods of inclusion and exclusion of experts. With respect to the NCOF database individual experts will be included usually following a referral by a police area as to suitability for inclusion. Professional credentials and experience are then carefully considered prior to any decision being taken to include the expert on the database.

The NCOF does not delete experts from its database, in order that a historical record is maintained. If concerns arise over a particular expert then a decision would be taken over his or her continued use. If the decision were not to use that expert again the record would be marked accordingly.

The National Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners is in the process of implementing registration of forensic practitioners nationally. This will cover all types of forensic practitioners but at present does not include paediatricians. Registration with the Council as a forensic practitioner is only possible after an assessment of an applicant's professional experience and credentials. Once suitable assessors are identified the scheme will be extended to paediatricians. This is a voluntary scheme, however once completed it will represent a definitive list of suitably competent practitioners.

Foreign Public Officials (Bribery)

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General what criteria are used by the Serious Fraud Office to determine whether to initiate an investigation into bribery of a foreign public official. [151400]

The Solicitor-General: The key criterion the SFO uses when deciding whether to accept a case is that the suspected fraud appears to be so serious or complex that its investigation should be carried out by those responsible for its prosecution. The following factors are taken into account:

1. The sum at risk is estimated to be at least £1 million (this is simply an objective and recognisable signpost of seriousness and likely public concern rather than the main indicator of suitability).

2. The case is likely to give rise to national publicity and widespread public concern. This would include cases involving Government Departments, public bodies, the governments of other countries as well as commercial cases of public interest.

3. The investigation requires a highly specialised knowledge of, for example, financial markets and their practices.

The case has a significant international dimension.

5. There is a need for legal, accountancy and investigative skills to be brought together in a combined operation.

6. The suspected fraud appears to be complex and one in which the use of Section 2 powers (Criminal Justice Act 1987) might be appropriate.

The SFO does not have separate criteria that apply to allegations of bribery of a foreign public official. Allegations of this nature would have to meet the above criteria for the SFO to commence an investigation.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General how many referrals there have been since 1997 to the Serious Fraud Office where bribery of a foreign public official has been an ancillary offence to another offence; and in how many instances since 1997 the SFO has investigated or prosecuted a company or individual for an offence to which bribery of a foreign public official was ancillary, or in which bribery of a foreign public official may have played a part. [151402]

The Solicitor-General: The SFO have identified five referrals since 1997 where bribery of a foreign public official may have been an ancillary allegation of the wider matter referred. One case is currently under investigation for other offences. The other cases have not resulted in prosecution for any offences.

The SFO does not routinely record all potential offences that may exist within a referred matter. As such there may have been other referrals that included an element of bribery of foreign officials that was not recorded.

Serious Fraud Office

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General whether investigation and prosecution under Part 12 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 are included in enforcement priorities of the Serious Fraud Office. [151406]

The Solicitor-General: Part 12 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act crates new offences. The SFO investigates and prosecutes offences of serious and complex fraud. In selecting cases, it gives priority to those that meet its published criteria agreed by Ministers. The SFO does not prioritise by reference to specific offences.

Once a case meeting the published acceptance criteria has been accepted for investigation, the SFO must consider which offence/offences are the most appropriate to prosecute. The offences falling under Part 12 of the Anti- terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 can now be considered.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Class Sizes

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will state the average class size of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) Chorley and (ii) Lancashire in each year since 2000. [151277]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: average class size[2]—Chorley parliamentary constituency and Lancashire local education authority

	Classes taught by one teacher			
	Chorley parliamentary constituency		Lancashire local education authority	
Position in January each year: 2000 to 2003	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
2000	28.3	23.6	27.7	22.7
2001	27.3	23.1	27.3	22.6
2002	26.9	23.6	26.7	22.4
2003	26.8	23.3	26.5	22.5

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Classes as taught during one selected period in each school on the day of the Census in January.

Source:

The Annual Schools' Census.

Departmental Policies (Plymouth)

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the *(a)* Plymouth, Sutton constituency, *(b)* Plymouth, Devonport constituency and *(c)* South-West Devon constituency, the effects on (i) Plymouth Travel to Work area and (ii) Plymouth Unitary Authority area of his Department's policies and actions in (A) 2001, (B) 2002 and (C) 2003. [147924]

Mr. Miliband: Outlined as follows is background on a range of the Department's policies and actions, and their impact on Plymouth and Devon local education authorities. Where analysis has allowed, constituencies requested and the Plymouth Travel to Work Area are detailed.

Specialist Schools Programme

The Specialist Schools Programme is contributing to the creation of a specialist system in which every secondary school has its own special ethos and works with others to spread best practice and raise standards. The programme helps schools, in partnership with private sector sponsors and supported by additional Government funding, to achieve their targets to raise standards. It promotes school improvement by providing opportunities for schools to work to their strengths, enabling them to deliver effective teaching and learning in their area of expertise, as well as across the curriculum, and to drive innovation.

Any maintained secondary school in England may apply to be designated as specialist in one of 10 areas: arts, business and enterprise, engineering, humanities, language, mathematics and computing, music, science, sports and technology. Schools can also combine any two specialisms.

There are currently 1,444 specialist schools operating in eight of the 10 specialisms (this represents 46 per cent. of all secondary schools). We expect the first music and humanities colleges to begin operating in September 2004. Over 1.5 million pupils now attend specialist schools—half of all pupils attending secondary schools are attending specialist schools.

The number of applications from schools wishing to be specialist is at record levels. In October 2001, 267 schools applied; in October 2003 it was 411.

Specialist schools raise £50,000 from private sector sponsorship (less in the case of schools with less than 500 pupils attending) and prepare four-year development plans for improvements in teaching and learning and involving other local schools and the wider community. Designated schools receive a £100,000 capital grant and £126 per pupil per annum for four years. Schools making good progress in meeting their targets can apply for extension funding for another four years.

The Government have set a target to increase the number of specialist schools to 2,000 by 2006. The aim is that all secondary schools will become specialist schools.

Beacon schools:

The Department is currently phasing out the existing beacon schools programme.

The leading edge partnership programme is specific to secondary schools and builds on the success of the beacon schools initiative to encourage an accelerated pace of change and improvement. We need our very best schools and departments to play a leading role in this; to encourage excellence, to develop curriculum expertise and to work with other schools to raise standards through improved teaching and learning. Leading secondary schools will work with other secondary school partners to find solutions to the most critical learning challenges and those most likely to have the greatest impact on closing the attainment gap. We are committed to establishing a network of 300 partnerships by 2006.

In primary, the leading practice programme, described in the recent primary strategy document "Excellence and Enjoyment", a strategy for primary schools, will build on successful practice developed through the beacon programme. We intend to develop a leading practice programme with common national criteria and branding. It will focus on identifying outstanding work in particular areas, within schools that are performing well across the board. The LEA will have a role in working with leading practice schools to ensure they contribute to local networking arrangements so that excellent practice is spread widely.

Excellence Clusters:

Excellence Clusters are designed to bring the benefits of Excellence in Cities (EiC) to smaller pockets of deprivation. Some 197 secondary schools and over 440 primary schools are involved in Excellence Clusters. Like EiC, the clusters focus on some of the most deprived areas of the country, using a structured programme designed to raise standards.

Clusters benefit from extra resources to provide the three core strands of the EiC programme:

Extended opportunities for Gifted and Talented pupils

Access to full time Learning Mentors for pupils who need them

Learning Support Units to tackle disruption.

A fourth strand of funding is available to target particular local issues, as identified by the schools in each cluster.

Under our transformation strategy for Education Action Zones (EAZs) established under the Standards and Framework Act 1998 41 of the 73 EAZs will transform to Excellence Clusters. This process will be completed by the end of April 2005.

Leadership Incentive Grant:

The Leadership Incentive Grant is intended to accelerate the improvement in standards and to strengthen leadership at all levels in schools. The grant also enables schools to work together to share expertise, resources and effective practice to strengthen teaching and learning.

Primary Leadership Strategy:

In 2003, primary schools in every LEA were invited to take part in the Leadership Programme, funded by the Primary National Strategy and developed in partnership with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). (The National Primary Strategy is a holistic whole-school improvement strategy, building on and incorporating the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.)

The programme seeks to support schools in improving the leadership of the teaching and learning of English and mathematics, helping to ensure that the rate of progress of children within the school community continues to improve as more reach the standards expected.

Sure Start:

Sure Start programmes work with parents-to-be, parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of young children—particularly those who are disadvantaged—so that they can flourish at home, when they get to school and during later life. The programme aims to help strengthen families and reduce child poverty by enabling parents to maximise their opportunities to work, learn and study, confident their children are being cared for in a safe and stimulating environment; and contribute to building and sustaining strong local communities through high quality and innovatively delivered family services, which respond to the needs of the communities they serve.

Connexions:

Connexions is the Government's front line support service for all young people in England aged 13–19. Connexions will play an integral role in the delivery of the agenda for reform on services for children and young people proposed in the Green Paper "Every child matters".

Through multi-agency working, Connexions provides integrated advice guidance and access to personal development opportunities to help remove barriers to learning and progression and ensure young people make a smooth transition to adulthood and working life. Personal advisers play a lead professional role. They provide advice on careers and lifestyle issues as well as barriers such as homelessness and drugs. They refer young people to specialist support where needed.

The new vision statement for Connexions launched in November 2002, signed by eight Government Ministers, re-affirmed the universal nature of the service.

Connexions' overarching objective is to reduce the number of 16 to 18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (MEET). Connexions Partnerships have a target of reducing local MEET numbers by 10 per cent. by November 2004.

Plymouth, Devonport

Four specialist schools covering Arts and Technology;

One beacon school (primary);

14 EiC Excellence Cluster schools;

Four secondary schools receive Leadership Incentive Grant;

One primary school is part of Primary Leadership Strategy;

Sure Start and Connexions programmes in operation.

Plymouth, Sutton

Three specialist schools covering Arts, Engineering and Technology;

Two beacon schools (one primary/one secondary);

Seven EiC Excellence Cluster schools;

One primary school is part of Primary Leadership Strategy;

Sure Start and Connexions programmes in operation;

Lipson Community School is in the top 100 improving maintained schools based on sustained improvement in the GCSE/GNVQ five plus A*-C indicator 2000–03.

South-West Devon

Covers two local education authorities:

Plymouth:

Three specialist covering Language, Maths and Sports;

One beacon secondary school;

Two primary schools part of Primary Leadership Strategy;

Sure Start and Connexions programmes in operation.

Devon:

One specialist covering Sports

One beacon primary school;

One primary school is part of Primary Leadership Strategy;

Sure Start and Connexions programmes in operation.

Total for South West Devon constituency:

Four specialist covering Language, Maths and Sports;

Two beacon schools (one primary/one secondary);

Three primary schools part of Primary Leadership Strategy;

Sure Start and Connexions programmes in operation.

Key Stage 1 test/task results at schools in Plymouth areas: 2001–03

	2001			2002			2003		
	Percentage of pupils at level 2 and above:			Percentage of pupils at level 2 and above:			Percentage of pupils at level 2 and above:		
Area	*English reading*	*English writing*	*Maths*	*English reading*	*English writing*	*Maths*	*English reading*	*English writing*	*Maths*
Plymouth, Devonport	80	82	88	80	80	88	80	77	88
Plymouth, Sutton	78	81	86	81	81	86	81	80	88
South-West Devon	88	89	93	88	90	94	89	87	93
Plymouth Unitary Authority	81	83	89	82	83	89	82	80	89
Plymouth TTWA	83	84	90	84	84	90	83	80	90

Key Stage 2 test/task results at schools in Plymouth areas: 2001–03

	2001			2002			2003		
	Percentage of pupils at level 4 and above:			Percentage of pupils at level 4 and above:			Percentage of pupils at level 4 and above:		
Area	*English*	*Maths*	*Science*	*English*	*Maths*	*Science*	*English*	*Maths*	*Science*
Plymouth, Devonport	68	67	83	68	68	83	70	68	84
Plymouth, Sutton	72	69	87	69	70	81	66	68	82
South-West Devon	82	80	93	81	82	92	83	82	93
Plymouth Unitary Authority	72	71	86	71	72	84	72	71	85
Plymouth TTWA	75	73	88	74	74	86	75	74	87

Key Stage 3 test/task results at schools in Plymouth areas: 2001–03

	2001			2002			2003		
	Percentage of pupils at level 5 and above:			Percentage of pupils at level 5 and above:			Percentage of pupils at level 5 and above:		
Area	*English*	*Maths*	*Science*	*English*	*Maths*	*Science*	*English*	*Maths*	*Science*
Plymouth, Devonport	53	57	58	57	58	59	60	61	59
Plymouth, Sutton	73	76	78	69	74	75	75	76	77
South-West Devon	73	75	77	71	74	77	82	82	83
Plymouth Unitary Authority	64	67	68	63	67	68	69	70	69
Plymouth TTWA	65	69	70	66	73	70	73	73	73

Key Stage 4 attainment at schools in Plymouth areas: 2001–03

	2001			2002		
Area	*Percentage gaining five plus GCSEs at A*-C*	*Percentage gaining one plus GCSEs at A*-G*	*Percentage gaining five plus GCSEs at A*-G*	*Percentage gaining five plus GCSEs at A*-C*	*Percentage gaining one plus GCSEs at A*-G*	*Percentage gaining five plus GCSEs at A*-G*
Plymouth, Devonport	34.3	94.1	87.8	39.0	93.7	87.1
Plymouth, Sutton	64.6	97.0	92.1	68.7	97.2	92.8
South-West Devon	62.9	97.4	94.5	57.7	96.7	93.2
Plymouth Unitary Authority	50.3	95.5	90.3	51.4	95.3	90.0
Plymouth TTWA	51.4	95.8	91.3	52.5	95.9	91.2

	2003		
Area	*Percentage gaining five plus GCSEs at A*-C*	*Percentage gaining one plus GCSEs at A*-G*	*Percentage gaining five plus GCSEs at A*-G*
Plymouth, Devonport	41.0	93.3	85.6
Plymouth, Sutton	67.3	97.5	93.2
South-West Devon	61.6	98.0	94.8
Plymouth Unitary Authority	53.0	95.5	89.9
Plymouth TTWA	54.9	96.3	91.4

DORE Achievement Centres

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 503W, on DORE achievement centres, when the meeting between officials and representatives of the DORE achievement centres and the dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit treatment programme will take place. [150207]

Mr. Miliband: A meeting between officials from the Department's Special Educational Needs and Disability Division and representatives of the DORE Achievement Centres/DDAT programme has been arranged for the afternoon of 19 February 2004.

Education Funding

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the formula spending share figure for Cambridgeshire for 2004–05 takes account of the requirement for Cambridgeshire to spend

£4.5 million more on schools set out in the direction notice from his Department to Cambridgeshire county council. [151584]

Mr. Miliband: The direction notice sent to Cambridgeshire county council asks the authority to increase its Schools Budget to a level consistent with full passporting. Full passporting means increasing the 2003–04 Schools Budget by the increase in the Schools Formula Spending Share from 2003–04 to 2004–05. Therefore the direction notice is based on the Schools Formula Spending Share figure for Cambridgeshire.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in his Department. [150934]

Mr. Charles Clarke: All members of the Department for Education and Skills have access to the internet. Filtering software is installed to block access to inappropriate sites and all accesses are monitored and recorded. Attempts to access inappropriate sites are referred for disciplinary action—staff have to accept the conditions for use of the equipment each time they log into the network.

Much of the software used by the Department are purchased on a corporate licence—where this is not the case records are maintained to ensure that only the number of licences purchased are used. All hardware is configured to prohibit the loading of unauthorised software.

The Department have started to use auditing software to reconcile the amount of software in use against the central records of software purchases. It is planning to conduct three monthly audits to achieve this.

Hardware is purchased centrally and details of all hardware items are held in an asset database. Hardware is subject to an annual audit where every item on the asset database is checked either physically or using auditing software to ensure it is still in being used correctly.

Appropriate action is taken in any cases where hardware cannot be found.

The Department's Internal Audit Division conduct regular audits to ensure that the conditions for use of hardware and software are both appropriate and are being enforced.

Landfill Tax Credit

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding for environmental educational initiatives will be lost by schools following the end of the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme; and if he will replace such lost funding from his departmental budget. [150644]

Mr. Miliband: The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (LTCS) has not ended, although two of the objects of the scheme were withdrawn in April 2003, those which concerned research and development, and education on sustainable waste management. Since April 2003 a number of projects in categories c and cc have continued to be financed by legacy funding through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Welsh and Scottish Assemblies and the Northern Ireland Authorities but the current arrangements will cease at the end of March. The value of environmental education projects funded in calendar year 2003 under these categories is £71,300, although that amount may increase since claims can be made until April 2004. However, some types of education projects are currently, and will still be, eligible for funding under some of the remaining objects of the scheme, for example biodiversity.

As part of the sustainable waste delivery public expenditure programme established as a result of the reform of the LTCS, and managed by Defra, work will be taken forward on waste awareness. Therefore, my Department has no plans to increase the level of funding for environmental educational in schools.

Local Government

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what aggregate percentage of central Government funding provided to Staffordshire local education authority is made up of the formula spending share. [150618]

Mr. Miliband: For 2003–04 Staffordshire's local education authority formula spending share made up 84 per cent. of the total resource funding for education made available to the authority, the remaining 16 per cent. being revenue grant funding within DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits.

School Buildings

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been spent on school buildings in Chorley, broken down by school, in each year since 1997. [151279]

Mr. Miliband: The Department does not collect detailed information about work carried out, but this should be held by Lancashire LEA. The following table sets out the capital allocations made by this Department to Lancashire LEA and its schools from 1997–98 to 2003–04.

Lancashire capital allocations 1997–98 to 2003–04

£000

	Capital allocation made
1997–98	13,288
1998–99	16,957
1999–2000	35,179
2000–01	38,021
2001–02	29,778
2002–03	46,470
2003–04	62,607

Physical Education

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average number of hours per week of physical education in schools in *(a)* Shrewsbury and Atcham and *(b)* Shropshire was in the last year. [151318]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is not currently held in the format requested. Detailed data on physical education and school sport is now being collected for the first time—for publication in April 2004—including the amount time spent each week on physical education in schools.

Pupil Funding

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the *(a)* average funding of each schoolchild in England and *(b)* the level of funding for a schoolchild in Shrewsbury and Atcham. [151407]

Mr. Miliband: The average national funding for 2004–05 provided through the Education Formula Spending Share for 2004–05 is £3,515. The formula for the main primary and secondary sub-blocks comprises a basic entitlement for each pupil, which is the same across the country, plus a top-up for each pupil with additional educational needs, which is again the same across the country, plus top-ups for areas where it costs more to recruit and retain teachers. Local education authorities with a greater proportion of pupils with additional educational needs or higher average earnings will receive a higher level of funding per pupil. The Government do not directly fund school children in Shrewsbury and Atcham. The Government provide funding to Shropshire county council which is then responsible for funding its schools.

School Meals Service

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many representations he has received on the decision of Essex local education authority to delegate the school meals service to primary schools; and if he will make a statement. [151763]

Mr. Miliband: Since December 2003, the Department have received five representations about meals provision in Essex; three have been received from schools, including correspondence from a school via my hon. Friend the Member for Harwich. There have also been two emails—one from an Essex County Councillor and a general inquiry from Governor Line.

School Teachers

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time (i) primary and (ii) secondary school teachers were employed in the Ribble Valley and Fulwood area in each year since 1997. [149802]

Mr. Miliband: The following table shows the number of regular teachers in maintained primary and secondary schools in the hon. Gentleman's constituency at January in each year since 1997.

	Maintained primary		*Maintained secondary*	
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
1997	290	110	430	70
1998	300	110	440	60
1999	300	140	450	80
2000	300	130	460	70
2001	310	150	460	60
2002	310	150	470	70
2003	310	150	480	90

Notes:
1. Includes middle schools as deemed.
2. Includes teachers on schemes leading to QTS and teachers not recognised as qualified.

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Scottish Botanic Garden

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding the Scottish Botanic Garden in Edinburgh receives from his Department. [150664]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This Department does not provide any funding for the Scottish Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. This is a matter for the Scottish Executive.

Specialist Comprehensive Schools

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the comparative performance of the 2003 Key Stage 4 performance tables of *(a)* specialist comprehensive schools whose admissions arrangements include selection by aptitude and *(b)* all other specialist comprehensive schools in respect of (i) raw scores and (ii) value added scores. [149537]

Mr. Miliband: No assessment along these lines has been carried out by the Department.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 30 January 2004

TRANSPORT

Birmingham Airport

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to visit Birmingham airport on official business. [151062]

Mr. McNulty: The Secretary of State has no plans to visit Birmingham airport in the near future. Ministers regularly visit all parts of the country, including the West Midlands and I visited Birmingham airport last summer.

East Midlands Airport

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the Chief Executive of East Midlands airport. [151059]

Mr. McNulty: Within the last six months, Ministers have met the Chief Executive of East Midlands airport and the Chief Executive of the Manchester Airports Group (which owns East Midlands airport).

EU Quick Start Programme

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action the UK is taking to comply with EU Quick Start programme objectives in transport projects. [151497]

Dr. Howells: The EU Quick Start programme comprises key projects, within existing Community programmes, that meet a set of criteria including readiness to start by end 2006 and impact on economic growth. There are two UK transport projects included in the programme. We are reviewing whether there are others that meet the criteria for inclusion.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151045]

Mr. McNulty: A Centre of Excellence was established within the Department for Transport in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition-based programmes and projects. As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings. All Centres of Excellence are currently developing future plans and as part of this process measurement of savings will be defined.

Ministerial Travel

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last travelled on the London Underground on official business. [151061]

Mr. McNulty: The Secretary of State regularly travels by all modes of public transport. My right hon. Friend last travelled on London Underground in November.

Railway Platforms

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans Network Rail has to lengthen platforms at London commuter stations. [151484]

Dr. Howells: Platform extensions are under way at Hollingbourne, Harrietsham and Charing, and extensions are planned at Braintree, Braintree Freeport, Cressing, White Notley, Harrow and Wealdstone, Bushey, Kings Langley, Apsley, Kernel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring, Cheddington, Bletchley, Billingshurst, Portslade, West Norwood, Hampden Park, Lewes, Farnham, Virginia Water, Basingstoke, Ascot, Farncombe, Milford, Witley, Liphook, Liss, Petersfield, Bentley, Brockenhurst, Camberley, Princes Risborough, Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross, High Wycombe, West Ruislip, South Ruislip, Wembley Stadium and Denham.

Railways

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many temporary speed restrictions are in force on Network Rail track. [151481]

Dr. Howells: Network Rail advises that there are currently 548 temporary speed restrictions on the railway network. This compares to a peak of approximately 1,200 speed restrictions in February 2001.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much public capital is allocated to the expansion of railway network capacity in the 10 Year Plan. [151483]

Dr. Howells: The latest allocations of public spending in the 10 Year Plan are set out in "Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report", which was published in December 2002. The total amount of public expenditure allocated for railways is £33 billion. This is broken down as follows:

	Amount (£ billion rounded)
2001–02	2.1
2002–03	2.8
2003–04	3.8
2004–05	3.8
2005–06	4.3
2006–07	4.2
2007–08	3.6
2008–09	2.9
2009–10	2.7
2010–11	2.8
10 Year Plan total	33

Road Deaths

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many deaths have occurred on *(a)* the

A316 between the end of the M3 and the first roundabout and *(b)* the M4 between junctions 4 and 1 in the last three years. [151487]

Dr. Howells: There has been one fatal accident on the M4 between junction 4 and junction 1 in the three years from September 2000 to August 2003. This occurred on the westbound carriageway near junction 3.

There were no fatal accidents on the A316 between the M3 at Sunbury Cross and the first roundabout, at its junction with the A312, in the same period.

Rural Bus Challenge

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used to determine which Rural Bus Challenge grants are awarded. [152122]

Mr. McNulty: The main objective of the Rural Bus Challenge is to encourage cost-effective innovation in the provision or promotion by local authorities of rural bus transport. The full criteria used in assessing bids to the 2003 competition are set out in guidance to local authorities issued in July 2003, a copy of which has been placed in the Libraries of the House and on the Department's website.

Transport and Works Act

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the public inquiries into applications made under the Transport and Works Act 1992 held in each of the last five years; how soon after the inquiry the inspector made his report to him in each case; and how long it took him to reach a decision in each case. [149986]

Mr. Jamieson: The following table shows the information requested in respect of applications made under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWA), with the exception of a few applications that will fall to be decided by the First Secretary of State, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry or the National Assembly for Wales. The variable periods for reaching a decision can partly be attributed to differences in the complexity of the cases. But in many cases this has been for reasons outside our control, such as the need to obtain more information from an applicant or the inspector, or the need for a related consent from another Department.

Year in which public inquiry started	*Title of Transport and Works Act 1992 application/order*	*Period from end of inquiry to receipt of inspector's report (weeks)*	*Period from receipt of inspector's report to decision (weeks)*
2003	Proposed London Gateway Logistics and Commercial Centre Order	Inspector's report awaited	—
2003	Proposed Midland Metro (Birmingham City Centre Extension, etc.) Order	Inspector's report awaited	—
2003	Proposed Docklands Light Railway (Woolwich Arsenal Extension) Order	11	Under consideration
2003	Proposed River Tyne (Tunnels) Order	23	Under consideration
2002	Proposed Greater Manchester (Leigh Busway) Order	22	Under consideration
2002	Proposed Network Rail (West Coast Main Line) (No. 2) Order	26	Under consideration
2001	The Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (Trafford Depot) Order	9	30
2001	Proposed Yorkshire Marina (Bridlington) (Works) Order	20	23
2001	Proposed Fawley Branch Line Improvements Order	40	Under consideration
2001	The Network Rail (West Coast Main Line) Order	30	38
2000	The Railtrack (Shortlands Junction) Order	10	16
2000	The London Underground (East London Line Extension) (No. 2) Order	5	43
2000	The Docklands Light Railway (Silvertown and London City Airport Extension) Order	17	53
2000	The Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (Land Acquisition) Order	5	21
2000	The Alconbury Airfield (Rail Facilities and Connection to East Coast Main Line) Order	76	35
2000	The Chester Guided Busway Order	15	33
2000	Proposed London International Freight Exchange and Proposed London International Freight Exchange (Variation) Orders—joint inquiry	27	15
1999	The South Hampshire Rapid Transit Order	13	51
1999	The Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (Trafford Park) Order	11	51

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff there are in his Department's Transport and Works Act processing unit, broken down by grade; and how many are *(a)* full-time, *(b)* part-time and *(c)* casual workers. [149988]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department's Transport and Works Act Orders Unit currently consists of 13 members of staff. The following table breaks down the Unit's staff into the categories requested.

Grade	*Number of staff at grade*	*Work pattern*
Grade 7 (PB6.1)	1	Full-time
Senior Executive Officer (PB5.1)	2	Full-time
Higher Executive Officer (PB4.3)	4	3 × full-time and 1 × part-time
Executive Officer PB3.2	4	Full-time
Administrative Officer PB2.1	2	Full-time

The Unit will shortly reduce to 12 members of staff, upon the reallocation of one Administrative Officer to other departmental duties.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Pathogens

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the relationship is between risk of spread of animal pathogens from a laboratory and the infectivity of the organism; and which pathogens are classified as group 2. [150896]

Mr. Bradshaw: The risk of a particular organism escaping from a laboratory is not directly affected by its infectivity. Defra classifies animal pathogens in different groups for containment purposes, according to the risk they pose to the health of farmed livestock and poultry. The assessment of risk takes account of a number of factors, including the infectivity of the pathogen and the nature and seriousness of the disease it causes. The higher the level of risk posed by an animal pathogen, the higher the level of laboratory containment required for its safe handling. The following animal pathogens are currently classified as Defra group 2 pathogens:

Anaplasma spp.
Aujeszsky's disease virus
Avian paramyxoviruses other than paramyxovirus 1 (PMV1) group
Babesia bigemina
Babesia bovis
Babesia caballi
Babesia equi
Borna disease virus
Bovine leukosis virus
Bovine malignant catarrh virus (African type)
Chlamydia psittaci
Cowdria ruminatum
Derzsky's disease virus (goose parvovirus)
Echinococcus multilocularis
Echinococcus granulosis
Equine viral arteritis
Getah virus
Hypoderma bovis
Hypoderma lineatum
Maedi-visna virus
Mycobacterium bovis
Mycobacterium tuberculosis
Mycobacterium africanus
Mycobacterium kansasii
Mycobacterium leprae
Mycoplasma agalactiae
Mycoplasma capricolum sub species capripneumoniae
Mycoplasma mycoides var capri
Newcastle disease virus—Hitchener Bl and F strains only
Porcine influenza viruses
Pox viruses—camel
Psoroptes communis var. ovis
Theileria spp.
Trichinella spiralis
Trypanosoma spp
Viral haemorrhagic disease of rabbits virus
Any other non-enzootic animal pathogen not listed in Defra groups 3 and 4

Animal Quarantine

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the period of notice provided to owners of facilities licensed to quarantine animals entering the UK before inspections are carried out is; [150790]

(2) what the minimum number per year is of inspections of facilities licensed to quarantine animals entering the UK; [150793]

(3) how many inspections of facilities licensed to quarantine animals entering the UK were carried out in each of the last five years. [150794]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under Article 9 of the Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats and other Mammals) Order 1974, which covers Great Britain, quarantine premises are required to be authorised by a licence issued by a Defra Minister.

In order to maintain their authorised status, quarantine premises for companion animals are required to be inspected by the State Veterinary Service. If the inspections are satisfactory, the premises are issued with an authorisation licence by Defra. The target for inspections is quarterly visits, that is four visits annually, two of which are pre-notified and two which are unannounced. Pre-notified visits are usually arranged two to four weeks in advance. There are normally, at least, three visits a year to authorised premises, and for some, there may be more than four annually.

In addition to these, when a complaint is received from the public, an unannounced visit is made to investigate the complaint.

Detailed records of inspections are kept for individual authorised quarantine premises, but are not collated centrally.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what types of diseases were detected in domestic animals in quarantine after entering the UK in each of the last five years. [150795]

Mr. Bradshaw: Quarantine rules relate only to controls to prevent the introduction of rabies into this country and do not require the reporting of other diseases.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proposals she has to reform the quarantine requirements for domestic animals entering the UK. [150796]

Mr. Bradshaw: Following the report in September 1998 by the Advisory Group on Quarantine (the Kennedy Report), "Quarantine and Rabies: A Reappraisal", the Government undertook a radical reform of the UK quarantine regulations. On 28 February 2000, the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) was introduced, which allows cats and dogs from specified

countries, and which comply with certain conditions, to enter the UK without going into quarantine. The Scheme has now been operating successfully for four years. We have no plans for any further major changes to quarantine law.

However, between December 2000 and March 2001, MAFF undertook a consultation exercise on proposals for legislation to update the law governing quarantine premises. Agreement of new EU rules on the movement of pet animals will also require some changes to the national quarantine legislation. We therefore expect to review the detailed rules on quarantine during 2004.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many facilities are licensed to quarantine animals in the UK; and where they are located. [150797]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is responsible for authorising quarantine premises for dogs, cats and all other rabies susceptible animals. These include zoos, research establishments and quarantine kennels and catteries. There are currently 40 authorised quarantine premises for dogs, cats and pet mammals in Great Britain; 36 are in England, one in Wales and three in Scotland. A list of these quarantine premises is freely available on the Defra website.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average cost was of keeping an animal in quarantine after entry to the UK in the last year. [150798]

Mr. Bradshaw: Quarantine premises set charges according to the facilities provided and it is a matter of contractual arrangement between the pet owner and the quarantine premises.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* cats and *(b)* dogs have died while being kept in quarantine after entering the UK in each of the last five years. [150799]

Mr. Bradshaw: The table shows the number of cats and dogs notified that died in quarantine in the last five years. It is a requirement on quarantine premises to notify all deaths in quarantine to Defra.

	Number of cats died in quarantine	*Number of dogs died in quarantine*	*Total number of deaths in quarantine*
1999	54	25	79
2000	35	30	65
2001	16	24	40
2002	29	27	56
2003	22	11	33

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the last recorded case was of a domestic animal showing signs of rabies while kept in quarantine after entering the UK. [150800]

Mr. Bradshaw: The last recorded case of a domestic animal showing clinical signs of rabies while in quarantine in the UK was in September 1990. This diagnosis was subsequently confirmed by laboratory tests.

Badgers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has collated on the estimated badger population of mainland continental Europe. [150897]

Mr. Bradshaw: The most recent assessment of the status of the badger (*Meles meles*) in Europe was published in 1997[1].

The quality of information available from each country varied considerably and as a result it was not possible to accurately estimate the Continent's total badger population. In an earlier publication[2], the same authors estimated that the European badger population was at least 1,220,000. At that time the British population was thought to be 250,000, which is approximately 20 per cent. of all European badgers.

[1] *Source:*
The conservation and management of the European badger (*Meles meles*) (1997). Nature and Environment No. 90; by H. I. Griffiths and D. H. Thomas; Council of Europe Publishing (ISBN: 92-871-3447-2).

[2] *Source:*
The status of the badger *Meles meles* (L.,1758) (Carnivora, Mustelidae) in Europe (1993) by H. I. Griffiths and D. H. Thomas; Mammal Review; 23, 17–58.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what account is taken of routine sightings of badgers during daylight hours in calculating population size and density. [150945]

Mr. Bradshaw: Routine, or incidental, sightings are rarely suitable for estimating animal abundance, although such sightings can be useful for establishing the presence of a species in a locality—especially in the case of rare animals.

Badger sightings have been used to estimate densities, but only as part of planned surveys following a scientifically robust methodology (Heydon, M. J., Reynolds, J. C. and Short, M. J. (2000); *Journal of Zoology*; 251, 253–264). Furthermore, sighting-based surveys of badgers are carried out at night rather than during daylight hours, as this is when badgers are most likely to be observed above ground.

By far the most widely used method for estimating badger density is based on signs rather than sightings of badgers. During the national surveys carried out during the 1980s and 1990s badger numbers were extrapolated from the density of setts (taking account of their size and level of activity) and the average size of badger social groups.

Full details of the sett surveying methodology used in the last national badger survey are given in: "Changes in the British badger population, 1988 to 1997" by G. Wilson, S. Harris and G. McLaren (1997), published by the People's Trust for Endangered Species.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the expected date is of completion of the project designed to assess the impact of removing badgers from the ecosystem; what the budgeted cost of the project is; from which institution the project is being managed; and who the lead scientist is. [150474]

Mr. Bradshaw: The expected date for completion of the project is the end of March 2005. The budgeted overall cost of the project is £1.48 million. The project is being managed by the head of the team at the Woodchester Park site of the Central Science Laboratory.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will seek from the European Commission permission to compensate farmers who have suffered consequential losses as a result of the suspension of badger culling in reactive areas in the randomised badger culling trials. [150496]

Mr. Bradshaw: I do not plan to seek permission from the European Commission to pay compensation for consequential losses due the cessation of culling in reactive areas of the randomised badger culling trial. The decision to suspend the reactive culling element of the trial was taken because the preliminary results indicated that this action would reduce the risk of TB breakdowns.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will conduct investigations into whether perturbation in badger populations can be eliminated or substantially reduced by improved culling programme design and execution. [150499]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has funded research into perturbation of badger populations subject to culling. The results of the most recent work are yet to be published.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to publish data on the prevalence of TB in badgers in areas of high incidence in cattle herds. [150500]

Mr. Bradshaw: Details of the incidence of TB in badgers captured during operations of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial will be published once the trial is finished, which is scheduled to be mid-2006.

These data will give an indication of the prevalence of TB in the badger population in trial areas; one of the criteria for the selection of these areas was that there was a high level of incidence of TB in cattle herds.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs based on the findings from post mortem examinations of badgers and other data, what her best estimate is of the number of TB-infected badgers existing in England and Wales; and what the best estimate was for that figure in 1994. [150507]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible to give an accurate figure for the number of TB-infected badgers existing in England and Wales because of the difficulty of estimating the size of the badger population and the reliability of the prevalence data available.

The prevalence of TB in MAFF-taken badgers collected in England and Wales each year from 1975 to 1996 is given in Appendix 10 of the Krebs Report (PB 3423).

The prevalence of TB in Road Traffic Accident badgers collected in England and Wales each year from 1972 to 1996 is given in Appendix 11 of the Krebs Report (PB 3423).

A copy of the Krebs Report is available in the Library of the House.

Data on the incidence of TB in badgers collected under the present Road Traffic Accident survey and the Randomised Badger Culling Trial should yield more accurate information, but these data will remain confidential until the trial is finished, which is scheduled to be mid-2006.

Mr. Owen Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what level of TB in badgers is sufficient for the disease to be considered as epidemic in the population; and how in this context the term endemic differs from the term epidemic. [150508]

Mr. Bradshaw: Bovine TB is endemic in badgers in the UK; i.e. it is constantly present in badgers within this geographical area. An epidemic occurs where the occurrence of an infection increases clearly beyond normal expectancy. There is currently no evidence to suggest that levels of bovine TB in badgers have increased substantially in recent years.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what factors increase the susceptibility of *(a)* badgers and *(b)* cattle to disease following exposure to *M. bovis* bacilli. [150513]

Mr. Bradshaw: Factors that increase the susceptibility of cattle to disease following exposure to *M. bovis* include general health, nutritional status and immunological capability. It is likely that similar factors are important in determining the susceptibility of badgers although no studies have been carried out on this particular subject.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many badger setts that have been sticked have subsequently been found to have been recolonised; and what action is taken in the event that such recolonisation is observed. [150544]

Mr. Bradshaw: Sticking of a Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) sett is a method used to indicate whether the sett is in active use. The team carrying out the post-cull survey will note the sign and use this information to inform their report. It may be difficult to identify whether a sett has been recolonised or whether there are badgers remaining from the original colony which were not captured during the trapping operation.

RBCT design requires culling operations to be repeated annually in Proactive areas to maintain badger numbers as low as possible. During such operations, traps are placed on active setts on premises consenting to culling and additionally at locations indicating the movement of badgers from any adjoining non-consent land.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the Oxford University research on badger perturbation being carried out on behalf of her Department to be

completed; when the report will be made available; who the lead scientist is; what the protocols are for this work; and what the budgeted cost is. [150546]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is expected that the Oxford University research on badger perturbation being carried out on behalf of the Department will be completed at the end of March 2004. It is likely that the final report will be available later this year. It is managed by a member of the university's Zoology Department. The project's protocol investigates whether the spatial and temporal scale of the perturbation processes, the pattern and speed of recolonisation and the relief of density-dependent inhibitions on reproduction and survival observed in the study area may be generalised. The budgeted overall cost for the project is £1.25 million.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what statutory measures exist for the licensing and authorisation of badger translocations; under what conditions licences or authorisations are issued; which Department is responsible for implementing their provisions; and what the nature and level of supervisions are over persons licensed or otherwise authorised to carry out translocations. [150581]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 249W, and 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1186W.

The specific conditions imposed on any licence are tailored to the particular circumstances of the operation to be undertaken.

Licences are issued by the appropriate statutory conservation agency or agricultural department (English Nature and Defra, respectively, in England) depending on the purpose of the proposed translocation. The licensing body is responsible for specifying the conditions and licensee is responsible for complying with them.

All licensed translocations are closely supervised by the issuing authority and by wildlife advisers with experience in licensed badger operations from the Department's National Wildlife Management Team.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 214–15W, on bovine TB, and 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 631W, on badgers, what plans she has to revise guidelines to farmers on the height, positioning and protection of feed and water troughs following the findings of the Central Veterinary Laboratory on the climbing capabilities of badgers. [150594]

Mr. Bradshaw: Recent research has demonstrated that in some circumstances badgers are capable of reaching cattle feed troughs set at least 80 cm above the ground.

There are no plans to change the existing height guidelines, as trough heights must be set so that the cattle intended to feed from them can still reach the contents. However, investigation into trough design to deter access by badgers is being carried out.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether persons wishing or authorised to undertake the relocation of badgers are required *(a)* to carry out tests on those animals and *(b)* to await the results of any such tests before setting them free in their new locations. [150609]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1186W. To briefly reiterate, all badgers relocated under the authority of a licence are tested three times for bovine tuberculosis and are only released if all three tests are negative. A similar approach is also applied to the relocation of rehabilitated badgers by animal hospitals, only in this case testing guidelines are not mandatory, but are set down in a voluntary code of practice.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the conclusions were of Professor Solly Zuckerman's 1988 report to the Ministry of Agriculture; and what his recommendations were for future strategy to protect *(a)* badgers and *(b)* cattle. [150713]

Mr. Bradshaw: A copy of Professor Zuckerman's 1980 report, in which he describes in detail his conclusions and recommendations, is available in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the effects of the use of more discrete methods of badger culling on culling results. [150893]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible to draw an accurate comparison between different methods of culling badgers because there are no reliable methods of estimating badger populations either before or after culling.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage cull of badgers was originally proposed for the Krebs trials; how the culling was to be achieved; and in what ways the protocol was amended in the final version. [150895]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Krebs report advised that in reactive areas all badgers, including lactating sows, should be removed from all social groups with territories including the breakdown farm. In the proactive areas there should be total removal of complete badger social groups from localised areas at high risk of breakdown, before herd breakdowns occurred. It also recommended that the use of stop-snaring should be explored as an alternative to trapping, and that an expert group should be established to oversee the detailed experimental design and operation of the trial.

The group which was established, the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB, considered the possible use of snaring. It decided against this method of capture in favour of cage trapping and recorded the rationale for doing so in its first report (PB3881). That report also records its reasons for introducing a closed season for three months each year, when no trapping takes place.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether any behavioural patterns have been observed in badgers showing signs of TB which predispose them to closer contact with cattle. [150944]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Central Science Laboratory has just finished a research project at Woodchester Park to investigate the behavioural consequences of bovine TB infection in badgers. The findings of this study will be published in the scientific press shortly.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her Answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 218W on bovine TB, how many countries use the current skin sensitivity test as the primary diagnostic tool for bovine TB; and how many have reported problems with this test. [150492]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are a number of different types of skin test in use around the world. We do not hold comprehensive information on the number of countries using each of these tests nor the way in which these tests are interpreted.

All countries that have either eradicated, or have a programme to control, bovine tuberculosis use one or more forms of the skin test. The Government have close links with a number of countries in various stages of eradication and exchanges information and experiences on the use of the tests in the context of these programmes.

The Government are not aware of any country that has replaced the skin test as the primary test for bovine tuberculosis.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is possible to determine the relative culpability of an owner of a herd in which a TB breakdown is recorded as to why animals become infected. [150502]

Mr. Bradshaw: In some cases, a TB breakdown may be attributable to a specific event, for example the purchase of an infected animal. In many cases, despite a veterinary investigation, it is not possible to determine the source of the infection with certainty. Defra does not attempt to determine relative culpability but has encouraged all farmers to take sensible precautions to reduce the risk to their cattle through the issue of the yellow "Better biosecurity" card and various booklets which contain guidance on disease prevention and control measures.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (1) how many deer have been subject to post mortem examinations by her Department for the presence of TB during the least five years; and how many were found to be infected; [150514]

(2) what historical data are held by her Department on the prevalence of bovine TB in the British deer population; and what those data indicate as to the incidence of bovine TB in that population; [150516]

(3) what her estimate is of the population of wild deer in England and Wales; what the estimated prevalence is of bovine TB in that population; and what concentrations there are of the disease in the wild population. [150515]

Mr. Bradshaw: No statutory body routinely collects information on overall wild deer numbers in England and Wales. Stephen Harris *et al.* (1995) estimated the pre-breeding population sizes for deer in Great Britain (Table 1).

Table 1: Population of wild deer in England and Wales (estimated)

Species	*England*	*Wales*
Red deer	12,500	<50
Fallow deer	95,000	<1,000
Roe deer	150,000	50
Sika deer	2,500	0
Muntjac deer	40,000	<250
Chinese water deer	650	0
Total	300,650	<1,350

Source:
Harris, S., Morris P., Wray S. and Yalden D. 1995. "A Review of British Mammals: Population Estimates and Conservation Status of British Mammals Other than Cetaceans". JNCC, Peterborough.

Table 2 shows the number of wild and farmed deer carcases, investigated for TB between 1992 and 2002 and the number of samples where *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*) was found following bacteriological culture.

Table 2: Deer samples tested for bovine TB

	Total number of deer tissue submissions investigated by Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA)	*Number of confirmed TB cases in wild deer*	*Number of confirmed TB cases farmed/park deer*	*Total number of deer confirmed with TB*
1992	50	0	1	1
1993	33	1	0	1
1994	21	1	0	1
1995	[1]—	3	0	3
1996	[2]17	11	0	11
1997	11	3	0	3
1998	37	6	1	7
1999	49	7	3	10
2000	39	3	6	9
2001	28	0	1	1
2002	54	3	10	13

[1] Data not available.
[2] Most accurate data currently available.

Defra has funded a survey of wildlife in the south-west of England by the Central Science Laboratory. The first phase established whether *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*—the causative organism for bovine tuberculosis) was present in a number of wild mammal species, including deer. *M. bovis* has been confirmed in five of the six established wild and feral species of deer in GB. The second phase of the survey (due to end March 2004) is to estimate prevalence of *M. bovis* in those species where it is found, by carrying out a more targeted and extensive sampling.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) pursuant to her Answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 218W, on bovine TB, whether the occasions of severe interference in the operational Krebs triplets areas represented a significant interference; whether that level of interference affected the conduct and outcome of

the trials; and what the effects were of that interference in terms of *(a)* the outcomes and *(b)* the costs involved; [150565]

(2) how many farms were affected during the Krebs trials by a partial clearance of the badger population which was subsequently stopped; how many partial clearances were undertaken after a delayed start; and how the incomplete clearances affected *(a)* the conduct of the trials and *(b)* their outcome. [150575]

Mr. Bradshaw: There has been a level of illegal activity and interference with the operation of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial which is certainly undesirable and could be considered significant. The cost of replacing stolen, lost and damaged traps is estimated to be approximately £400,000. Other costs relate chiefly to the loss of staff time, which cannot be provided at proportionate cost.

At the time of cessation of the reactive strategy one premises was in the process of being trapped and the operation was concluded with only half the number of trapping nights completed. A number of other operations have been stopped early for a variety of reasons, for example bad weather or activity by animal activists. If an operation is not able to start as scheduled, it is extended to ensure that the standard period of two weeks' trapping is maintained.

Standard Operating Procedures take account of the possibility of interruption to trapping operations. Although interference varied across trial areas, the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB found that the increase in the incidence of TB in reactive culling areas when compared with control (no culling) areas was consistent across all triplets.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the percentage increase was in the number of TB reactor herds reported in 2003 compared with 2002; and what factors are believed to be responsible for this increase. [150576]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 2003, up to the end of November, there had been 2,880 new cattle herd TB incidents in Great Britain. In the same period in 2002, there were 3,035 new TB herd incidents reported.

It is difficult to draw comparison between 2002 and 2003, because the testing effort in 2002 was very much increased to clear the backlog of testing after the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many herds required 60-day tuberculosis tests in 1988. [150586]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 1988, 351 herds required short-interval ('60-day') tests.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated infective dose is of TB bacilli (*var bovis*) in respect of cattle, by reference to infection portals; what the peak load is of bacilli that can be excreted in the urine of infected badgers; and what the predicted die-off rate is of the TB bacilli on grassland. [150591]

Mr. Bradshaw: Determination of the minimum infectious dose of *Mycobacterium bovis* in cattle is part of the TB pathogenesis research programme. Early indications are that the minimum infectious dose for cattle via the respiratory tract is relatively small; the lowest infectious dose recorded so far is 70 colony forming units CFU, when introduced by the intracheal route or 9,600 CPU by the intranasal route.

Relatively high levels of *M. bovis* in the urine of badgers with renal TB have been identified by culture methods, so far bacterial loads of up to 300,000 colony forming units per millilitre of urine have been measured.

It is known that the survival of *M. bovis* on pasture is widely variable depending on climate and pasture type. In hot dry weather survival may be a day or less whereas in cool damp weather *M. bovis* may survive for several months and in some circumstances in excess of six months.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 216W, on bovine TB, what other rapid assay techniques are *(a)* available and *(b)* in the course of development which have the potential to speed up the detection of *M. bovis* in suspected TB lesions submitted for laboratory analysis. [150597]

Mr. Bradshaw: Several liquid culture methods are commercially available for the isolation of bacteria of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex from clinical samples. These methods are mainly used in medical laboratories for the diagnosis of TB in humans. Although the liquid culture media can significantly shorten culture times, they have not been optimised for isolation of *M. bovis*. The growth requirements of *M. bovis* and *M. tuberculosis* are slightly different and culture media that work for one mycobacterium may not work so well for the other.

The Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) is evaluating the *M. bovis* recovery rates and ease of use of two of these liquid culture media compared with the traditional method used for cattle and badger tissues. Preliminary findings suggest that one of these systems might be adequate for rapid isolation of *M. bovis* from badger tissues. Additional experiments are under way to validate these findings and see if they can be extrapolated to cattle samples.

The VLA is also collaborating with the Imperial College in the design and optimisation of a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay for the detection of *M. bovis* DMA in suspect TB lesions.

Although this is a priority area of research for Defra, it is unlikely that any of the new laboratory tests being evaluated can totally replace the traditional culture technique.

Carcase Burial Pits

Mr. Burnett: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what costs were incurred by her Department and its predecessor in relation to the proposed carcase burial pits at Ash Moor in Devon, broken down by *(a)* costs in relation to the acquisition of rights of way, *(b)* costs of construction

including materials and off-site works, *(c)* security costs, *(d)* costs of restoration, including off-site works, *(e)* legal and professional fees and costs and *(f)* consultants' fees and costs. [151086]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The site was declared closed by Defra in late 2001. Costs incurred prior to 12/2001 relate to site construction, costs after 12/2001 relate to site management and restoration.

£

	Up to end 11/2001	*From 12/2001*
Purchase of site (inc Acquire rights of way)	300,000	Nil
Cost of Construction	5,686,000	965,350
Security (inc fence maintenance)	395,000	215,000
Legal fees (estimated)	100,000	70,000
Consultant fees and costs	203,000	[1]603,950

Notes:
[1] Figure quoted includes site management changes

Environmental Protection

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department has spent in each of the past three years on training for environmental health officers under the Contaminated Land Regime, Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and if she will make statement. [150612]

Mr. Morley: With grant-in-aid from the Department, the Environment Agency enables training in procedural and technical aspects of the regime to include places for both local authority and Agency staff, in a joint approach. The latter often make up 75 per cent. or more of those attending.

The Agency spent around £180,000 on developing such training in 2003–04, and an estimated £120,000 to £150,000 per annum in earlier years. They work closely with the National Society for Clean Air, and the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health who also provide training for local authority staff. The Agency has made materials available for use by other training providers.

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial and practical assistance her Department has given to environmental health officers since the Contaminated Land Regime, Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 came into force; and if she will make a statement. [150613]

Mr. Morley: The Department has been providing financial assistance to English local authorities for contaminated land capital projects for many years. Since the introduction in April 2000 of the contaminated land regime in Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, a total of £33.083 million capital funding has been provided, covering the financial years 2000–01 to 2002–03. Final figures are not yet available for 2003–04, but approvals to local authorities total a further £10.8 million, although the final outturn may be lower. Our project assessors frequently give advice to individual authorities which can save money and improve results.

To reflect the revenue implications of the regime for local authorities, £12 million per year was added to revenue support grant, and distributed in the normal way through the system of standard spending assessments. Capital and revenue support will continue under the new prudential finance system.

The Department, together with the Environment Agency, has also been producing procedural and technical guidance, notably the Contaminated Land Exposure Assessment (CLEA) Model and associated materials. This work is continuing. Details are available on the Department's website. The Environment Agency have also produced a number of technical and other documents.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what impact she expects the increase in the Scottish North Sea fleet haddock quota will have on landed prices; [150322]

(2) what the effect on market prices is of major quota increases for a fish species. [150323]

Mr. Bradshaw: The price for an internationally traded species of fish, such as haddock, will tend to be influenced by the world price.

The processing industry imports substantial quantities of fish to meet its needs and over time can adjust its import needs for species such as haddock, if the price and quality of domestic landings are considered appropriate.

However, in the short term, prices for fish landed at UK ports may be affected by a number of factors, including the quality and size of fish, and whether exceptionally heavy or light concentrations of fish, are landed at particular times.

Prices can also be affected by marketing activities. I understand that Seafish and Seafood Scotland, with the support of Scottish fishermen, are about to begin a consumer campaign for marketing haddock.

GM Crops

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Government's response to the farm scale evaluations of GM crops will be published. [151642]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The Government have received advice from the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) on the implications of the farm scale evaluation results. We are consulting with the devolved Administrations before deciding whether to accept ACRE'S advice.

The Government are now considering their overall policy on GM crops in the light of all the available information, including ACRE'S advice. We are aiming to set out our conclusions shortly.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for further scientific tests of GM crops following the farm scale evaluations. [151643]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) will advise on a case-by-case basis for each individual GM crop whether we have enough scientific evidence to enable us to make decisions. If further evidence is needed then we would expect the applicants to provide it. We are currently considering priorities for further publicly funded research in light of science review report.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what cost savings have been made in her Department since the introduction of the Information Technology procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151042]

Alun Michael: A Centre of Excellence was formally established within Defra in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition based programmes and projects. As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings. All Centres of Excellence are currently developing future plans, and as part of this process measurement of savings will be defined and reported.

Ivory

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Government's policy on the proposed sale of ivory stockpiles by *(a)* Namibia, *(b)* Botswana and *(c)* South Africa under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. [150963]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* It was agreed at the 12th Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Chile in 2002, that any one-off ivory sales would be supervised through a strict control system. It was also agreed that no sales would take place before May 2004 at the earliest to provide time for baseline data to be gathered on population and poaching levels and for information to be obtained on whether potential importing countries can effectively regulate their domestic ivory markets. The aim of these controls is to prevent any illegal ivory from entering into legal markets and to discourage an upsurge in poaching.

The Government are strongly opposed to the illegal and unsustainable trade in elephant ivory. We will therefore insist at the CITES Standing Committee in Geneva in March 2004 that all of the strict conditions governing the one-off sale are met in full before any trade is allowed to go ahead.

Krebs Trials

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her Answer of 11 December 2003, *Official Report,* column 539W, what the detailed protocol was for the wildlife survey undertaken as part of the Krebs trials; and whether landowner participation was invited for the specific surveys carried out in pursuance of this survey. [150569]

Mr. Bradshaw: Survey techniques employed on this project to assess abundance of wildlife include spotlight surveys of hedgehogs, foxes, rabbits and brown hares and count surveys of ground-nesting birds. Radiotelemetry is also used to study the behaviour and mortality of hedgehogs, and video and still camera surveillance to monitor predation of birds' nests. Fox diet has been investigated through the collection of faecal samples. Detailed protocols of these techniques will be documented in scientific publications which are currently in preparation. All landowners were contacted to request their permission for access to land before surveys were carried out.

Rural Payments Agency

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of appeals against the Rural Payments Agency were successful in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2002–03. [151957]

Alun Michael: The Rural Payments Agency is responsible for the administration of the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) Appeal Procedure in England. The procedure was introduced on 1 April 2002 to provide IACS scheme applicants with easy access to an independent review of decisions on their claims. Those appellants who are unsuccessful at the first stage of the procedure have the opportunity to progress to a second stage. The percentage of successful appeals under each stage of the appeal procedure is as follows:

	2002–03	*2003 to date*
Number of appeals completed stage 1	50	48
Percentage successful/partially successful	30	27
Number of appeals completed stage 2	5	18
Percentage successful/partially successful	20	33

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to pay interest on the late settlement of rural payments due to appeals. [151959]

Alun Michael: The Rural Payments Agency will consider on a case-by-case basis requests for the payment of compensation in lieu of interest in successful appeals.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* total number and *(b)* average value of appeals under consideration by the Rural Payments Agency is. [151960]

Alun Michael: There are currently 28 Stage 1 and three Stage 2 appeals under consideration by the Rural Payments Agency under the Integrated Administration and Control System Appeal Procedure in England. Information on the average value of appeals under consideration can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Thames Gateway (Flood Risk)

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment of flood risk in the Thames Gateway Development Area has been made by the Environment Agency; and if she will make a statement. [150902]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: The Thames Gateway Development area is currently protected from flooding to a standard in excess of 1:1000 (or a 0.01 per cent. chance).

This standard will be maintained until 2030 by the existing defences. The Environment Agency is now starting to consider the longer-term strategy for the whole Thames estuary beyond this date including mitigation for the impacts of climate change.

Warm Front

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the rationale is behind the cut-off point of £14,200 for household income above which a family in receipt of working tax credit will not qualify for assistance through the Warm Front scheme. [150436]

Mr. Morley: This cut-off point was established to help target those on low incomes and therefore more likely to be in fuel poverty.

The eligibility criteria for Warm Front are broadly in line with the low income priority group for the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC). In a consultation document on the changes to the tax credit system affecting the priority group for the EEC, published by the Department in December 2002, a cut-off point of around £14,000 was proposed for child tax credit and working tax credit.

Following that consultation and consideration of the responses received, a cut-off point of £14,200 was set for the EEC. To maintain consistency, this was also introduced to the eligibility criteria for Warm Front.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Office of the Speaker

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the monthly cost of the Office of the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly *(a)* was in the six months before suspension and *(b)* has been since suspension, broken down by (i) staff costs and (ii) administration costs. [150833]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The average monthly expenditure for the Office of the Speaker for the six months prior to suspension—from 1 May 2002 to 31 October 2002—was £15,234 of which staff costs accounted for £12,067 and administrative costs for £3,167. For administrative purposes figures have been included for the period up to and including 31 October 2002.

The average monthly expenditure for the Office of the Speaker for the eight months following suspension—from 1 November 2002 to 30 June 2003—was £18,881 of which staff costs accounted for £13,392 and administrative costs for £5,489. This included the costs of a number of events already planned prior to suspension of the Assembly.

The average monthly expenditure for the Office of the Speaker for the last six months—from 1 July 2003 to 31 December 2003—was £13,401 of which staff costs accounted for £12,846 and administrative costs for £555.

Children's Homes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase the number of children's home places in the province. [151185]

Angela Smith: In recent years the total number of available residential places has increased from 332 (2001) to 409 (January 2004). Plans for a further increase in the number of residential places and a continuing programme of replacements for unsuitable and substandard facilities are currently being developed but have not yet been fully finalised. It is expected that these further plans will involve an increase of around 50 in the number of residential places available over the next three years.

Civil Service

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in negotiating a pay settlement within the Northern Ireland Civil Service following the recent industrial action; and what steps the Department of Finance and Personnel have taken to engage in pay negotiations with union representatives. [151621]

Mr. Pearson: Extensive negotiations over several months did not result in an agreed pay deal for the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration this year. Management Side presented an offer worth 3.67 per cent. on 5 November. As this could not be agreed, and Trade Union Side declined to negotiate within the 3.67 per cent. envelope, we took the decision to proceed to pay the award and communicated this to staff and Trade Union Side on 27 November . I have made clear to Trade Union Side that the 3.67 per cent. deal is the maximum that can be paid. We are however open to exploring other reasonable means of resolving the dispute. A further meeting of the Central Whitley Council between Trade Union and Management Sides has been arranged.

Classroom Assistants

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time classroom assistants were employed in Northern Ireland's schools in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement on (i) the recruitment and (ii) the retention of classroom assistants in Northern Ireland. [150678]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is as follows.

	Part-time	*Full-time*
1997[1]	2,181	705
1998[1]	2,696	748
1999[1]	3,019	793
2000[1]	3,273	815
2001[1]	3,558	886
2002	4,157	1,137
2003	5,133	1,178

[1] Figures for Voluntary Grammar Schools and Grant Maintained Integrated Schools are not available for these years.

Recruitment and retention of Classroom Assistants does not pose any difficulties in Northern Ireland.

Armagh College Staff

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the full-time equivalent staffing complement at Armagh College of Further and Higher Education was at the end of academic years *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03. [151620]

Jane Kennedy: The full-time equivalent staffing complements for Armagh College of Further and Higher Education for the specified academic years are:

(a) 2001–02: 95.31; and

(b) 2002–03: 95.11.

Dementia

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent steps he has taken to improve services for those who develop dementia early in life. [151183]

Angela Smith: The Health and Social Services Trusts provide a range of hospital and community-based services to people with dementia, including those who develop this condition early in life. However there are some younger people whose needs are not being fully met and Trusts are therefore working with this group to determine their specific requirements. The emphasis will be on maintaining people with dementia at home with adequate support from qualified and trained staff.

Dementia services will be included in a comprehensive evaluation of policy and services being undertaken by the Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability.

Disabled Persons

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what means are used to assist disabled persons in gaining employment in Northern Ireland. [151181]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Employment and Learning through the Disablement Advisory Service provides advice, guidance, training and a job-placing service for people with disabilities and health issues. The service assists disabled people who wish to obtain or retain employment and is delivered by a team of Disablement Employment Advisers based in JobCentres/Jobs and Benefits Offices across Northern Ireland.

The Department provides a range of programmes which have been designed to assist people with a range of disabilities enter and keep employment. These include the Job Introduction Scheme, Access to Work, Employment Support and New Deal for Disabled People. The Department also administers European funding under the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity and the EQUAL Community Initiative which support people with health problems and disabilities return to employment.

The Special Needs Careers Service provides a service to young people with disabilities in full-time education and training and after completion of these.

E-Government

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to promote e-government services within his Department. [150666]

Mr. Spellar: The electronic delivery of services is central to our commitment to providing modern, efficient services and to making government more open and accessible to the public.

The publication of the OnlineNI Strategy in April 2003 provides a framework for the future development of e-government and electronic service delivery in Northern Ireland. Both Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office have a target to have 100 per cent. key services capable of being delivered electronically by the end of 2005.

Maternity Statistics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many women from outside the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland gave birth at each maternity unit in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [150753]

Angela Smith: One woman from outside the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland gave birth at a maternity unit in Northern Ireland during the last 12 months.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many women from outside Northern Ireland gave birth in the province in each of the last 12 months who were from *(a)* Great Britain, *(b)* the Republic of Ireland, *(c)* other EU countries and *(d)* outside the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [150754]

Angela Smith: The table shows the number of women from *(a)* Great Britain, *(b)* the Republic of Ireland, *(c)* other EU countries and *(d)* outside the European Union who gave birth in Northern Ireland in each of the last 12 months.

Month	*GB*	*ROI*	*EU*	*Non-EU*
January 2003	9	21	0	0
February 2003	1	27	0	0
March 2003	4	26	0	0
April 2003	8	22	0	0
May 2003	11	17	0	0
June 2003	11	25	0	0
July 2003	6	35	0	0
August 2003	8	24	0	0
September 2003	8	24	0	1
October 2003	9	24	0	0
November 2003	7	30	0	0
December 2003	7	22	0	0
Total 2003	89	297	0	1

Source:
Child Health System

MOT Tests

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* failed MOT tests were performed at each test centre in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months. [151208]

Angela Smith: Information on successful and unsuccessful MOT tests could be provided from the manual test records of the Department of the Environment's Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency (DVTA) only at disproportionate cost. However, new information technology recently installed in all DVTA test centres will allow this information to be extracted in the future.

In the meantime, the table shows, by test centre, the number of all tests and re-tests (previous test failures) for all vehicle categories for which roadworthiness certificates are required, including those generally referred to as MOT tests. It should be noted that the re-test figures can include multiple re-tests on a single vehicle, that the re-test may not take place at the same centre as the original test and that re-test numbers may be affected by the proportion of tests on different categories of vehicles at individual test centres. The re-test figures do not include vehicles which fail the full test but are not subsequently presented for re-test.

Number of vehicle tests carried out—January to December 2003 (inclusive)

	Number of full tests	*Number of retests*
Armagh	23,859	6,391
Ballymena	40,706	8,121
Belfast	56,825	13,547
Coleraine	38,892	7,814
Cookstown	34,867	7,976
Craigavon	33,482	9,009
Downpatrick	28,642	6,280
Enniskillen	24,842	5,216
Larne	22,166	4,197
Lisburn	34,837	9,558
Londonderry	27,673	7,056
Mallusk	37,137	8,632
Newry	29,097	6,520
Newtownards	51,263	12,206
Omagh	20,871	5,114
Total	50,5159	11,7637

Moylinn GP Co-operative

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the relocation of the Moylinn General Practitioner Co-operative. [150732]

Angela Smith: I can advise that the out-of-hours facility at Moylinn will be moved to new purpose built premises on the Craigavon Area Hospital site. Building work is set to begin in the spring with the transfer of the out-of-hours services from Moylinn due to be completed early autumn this year.

Muckamore Abbey Site

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what input he has sought from service users into plans for redevelopment of the Muckamore Abbey Site. [151186]

Angela Smith: The redevelopment of Muckamore Abbey Hospital was first identified in strategies for services for people with learning disabilities produced by the Eastern and Northern Health and Social Services Boards in the mid-1990s. These strategies were the subject of extensive consultation, including public meetings held in number of venues throughout the Boards' areas.

In July 2000, North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust distributed 800 copies of a consultation document on Muckamore Abbey Hospital. A number of public meetings were held, including a briefing meeting held by the Chief Executive for MLAs. A team of social workers visited the families of every inpatient in the hospital to hear their views on the proposed changes to the hospital.

A service users' focus group has been set up which has been independently facilitated from outside the hospital. The focus group is made up of people who are currently hospital patients and people who are ex-patients. This is informing the modernisation process.

NHS

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what charges are in place for people using NHS services in Northern Ireland who do not reside in the United Kingdom; and whether these charges extend to citizens from *(a)* the Republic of Ireland and *(b)* other EU member states. [150669]

Angela Smith: The responsibility for calculating charges for private patients, or for patients who are not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, lies with Health and Social Services Trusts, each of which maintains its own list of charges. Residents of countries within the European Economic Area (EEA) are entitled to free treatment if they are taken ill while visiting Northern Ireland. Patients may also be referred to Northern Ireland for treatment of a specific condition under formal contractual arrangements between individual hospitals or health boards. With the exception of cross-border workers, visitors from the Republic of Ireland have the same entitlement to treatment as those from any other EEA country.

Racist Incidents

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment the Community Relations Council has made of the level of race hate crime in Northern Ireland; what remedies they recommend; and what action he has taken as a result. [149245]

Mr. Spellar: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council to write to my hon. Friend and I shall arrange for a copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Orthopaedic Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting times are for *(a)* inpatient admission and *(b)* outpatient assessment in each of the Province's orthopaedic centres. [151212]

Angela Smith: The information is as follows:

(a) The average waiting time for inpatient admission to the Trauma and Orthopaedic Specialty by Provider Trust in 2002–03 is shown in the following table.

Provider Trust	Average wait in days
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	16
Green Park Healthcare HSS Trust	174
Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust	21
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	188
Northern Ireland Average	162

Note:
The data are calculated based on those people who were electively admitted to hospital during 2002–03.
Data for the Royal Group of Hospital HSS Trust include patients admitted to the Trauma and Orthopaedic specialty in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.
The casemix at the Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust and the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust is different to the casemix at Green Park Healthcare HSS Trust and Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust. This accounts for the large variation in average waiting time between these Trusts.
Source:
Hospital Inpatients System

(b) The information requested is not available

Racism (Chinese Community)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many racist incidents involving victims from the Chinese community occurred in Northern Ireland in *(a)* each of the last three years and *(b)* the current year to date. [148257]

Mr. Spellar: I am sorry for the delay in replying.

Reported racial incidents against the Chinese community in Northern Ireland

Financial year	Number of attacks
2000–01	78
2001–02	33
2002–03	44
2003 to Present	58

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) his Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147988]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Since January 2003 a total of 12 passes have been reported lost and two stolen by staff in my Department; and during the same period five were reported lost and two stolen by staff in departmental agencies. The likelihood of any increased threat to the Department or Agency as a result of the loss of a pass is assessed on each occasion and any appropriate action is taken.

This reply relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not cover the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [150403]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave today to the hon. Member for Winchester (Question Ref. 147988).

Sign Language

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in Northern Ireland are trained in sign language. [151220]

Angela Smith: There are 17,000 people in Northern Ireland who have severe or profound deafness. Approximately 4,500 of these people use sign language. Hearing people who associate with signers in business or personal life also use sign language. Statistics are not available on how many individuals are trained in sign language, however, there are currently only five fully qualified registered BSL interpreters in Northern Ireland and one ISL interpreter.

The Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP) in Northern Ireland have provided details of the BSL and ISL training given at each level from 2000 to 2003.

Sign Language	2000	2001	2002	2003
Level 1[1]	456	592	522	386
Level 1[2]	63	60	32	27
Level 2[1]	72	60	81	84
Level 2[2]	12	16	20	13
Total	603	728	655	510

[1] British
[2] Irish

Working Time Regulations

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil servants have applied under new Working Time Regulations to work from home, broken down by gender; and how many requests have been successful in each case. [149214]

Mr. Pearson: The number of applications to work from home made by civil servants employed in NI Departments and the Northern Ireland Office under the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (which came into effect on 6 April 2003), and the number of successful requests, are shown in the table.

The procedures and timescales to be followed are specified in the Flexible Working (Procedural Requirements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

Also shown are the number of applications received since 6 April 2003 under existing work-life balance provisions, made outside the scope of the legislation, and the number of successful requests.

	Requests under legislation			Requests made outside the scope of the legislation		
Requests for home-working since 6 April 2003	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Applications	[1]3	3	6	3	[1]3	6
Successful applications	1	2	3	1	1	2

[1] One application currently under consideration.

HEALTH

Abortion Act

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the application of section 1(1)(d) of the Abortion Act 1967 (as amended); [143172]

(2) if he will make a statement on whether cleft palate or cleft lip are regarded as serious handicaps for the purpose of section 1(1)(d) if the Abortion Act 1967 (as amended). [143173]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Parliament decided in 1967 that a pregnancy could be terminated by a registered medical practitioner if two registered medical practitioners are of the opinion, formed in good faith that there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped. The term "seriously handicapped" has not been interpreted by any court decisions.

Permission to proceed to a judicial review on these matters was granted on 1 December 2003 and will be considered by the courts at a hearing starting on 24 May 2004. The claimant is also seeking a declaration as to the incompatibility of section 1(1)*(d)* of the Abortion Act 1967 with Articles 2, 3, 8 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights. A Minister of the Crown is entitled to join any proceedings where the Court is considering whether to make a declaration of incompatibility. The Secretary of State for Health has now given formal notice of his intention to join the proceedings to assist the court on these matters.

Cancer Research

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department plans to complete its evaluation of the SunSmart campaign; and when he will decide the amount of funds Cancer Research UK will receive to continue the campaign. [152010]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Evaluation of the SunSmart campaign is being undertaken on an on-going basis. Cancer Research UK is working on a plan for future activity on the basis of lessons learned from the underpinning qualitative research by the University of Strathclyde, which was completed in September 2003. Decisions on the funding of a future campaign will be taken in due course.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150286]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department and its Executive Agencies occupies 71,369 m^2 in Central London for the offices of civil servants and an additional 1,904 m^2 in Greater London.

Ectopic Pregnancy

Jane Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of deaths from ectopic pregnancy; and if he will make a statement. [150771]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department is currently preparing a national service framework for children, which will include standards for maternity care, including the management of problems in early pregnancy. It also currently provides Section 64 support for the organisation The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust, which provides information, support and advice to those affected by ectopic pregnancy, and works to raise awareness. Details of the grants provided are shown in the following tables.

Core grant

	£
2000–01	20,000
2001–02	20,000
2002–03	10,00

Project grant for the Chlamydia and Ectopic Pregnancy project

	£
2001–02	9,500
2002–03	9,500
2003–04	9,500

Food Supplements Directive

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the Minister for Public Health has set a date for his proposed meeting with Commissioner Byrne to discuss the interpretation of Article 5 of the Food Supplements Directive;. [144870]

(2) if he will list the dates when he expects that Ministers from his Department will meet their counterparts in each of the Member and Candidate States of the European Union to discuss the interpretation of Article 5 of the Food Supplements Directive; which officials will accompany Ministers at each of those meetings; what main points he expects will be made; and if he will make a statement. [144871]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Article 5 of the Food Supplements Directive lays out a framework for the future setting of maximum permitted levels of vitamins and minerals in food supplements, The European Commission has not yet made a proposal listing European Union maximum permitted levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements and we do not expect it to do so for another two to three years.

The United Kingdom continues to take every opportunity to press its view that maximum levels should be set on a safety basis. I am seeking to arrange a discussion with Commissioner Byrne at the earliest practical opportunity.

Influenza

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what definition the Department uses of an influenza epidemic; [142961]

(2) how many reported cases of influenza there were in each of the last five years; and in which of these years the reported level of influenza cases has been classified as an epidemic. [142962]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The numbers of influenza-like illnesses reported to the Royal College of General Practitioners in the past five winter seasons are shown in the table.

In none of these years did the level of general practitioner consultation rate reach 400 per 100,000 of the population, which is the level required to be classed as an epidemic.

	Number of influenza like illnesses
1998–99	10,044
1999–2000	8,513
2000–01	5,901
2001–02	4,111
2002–03	3,541

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the forecast outcome for the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust is for 2003–04; what assessment has been made of its level of financial risk; and what loans it has *(a)* taken and *(b)* applied for from the NHS Bank in 2003–04. [151239]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Audited information on the financial position of national health service trusts will be published in their individual annual accounts. These data will be available centrally in the autumn.

At the Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) Board meeting on 20 January 2004, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust reported a deficit of £1.7 million as at the end of December 2003. The SHA has assessed the financial risk and is forecasting a break even position for the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust at the end of the financial year 2003–04.

The SHA has not made an application to the NHS Bank on behalf of the trust in 2003–04.

Long-term Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1110W, on personal care charges, what the sources of the estimate are; and if he will place in the Library the assumptions and analysis from which this estimate was derived; [151468]

(2) pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1110–11W, on long-term care, what the evidential basis is for his estimate; and if he will place in the Library the assumptions and analysis from which this estimate was derived. [151628]

Dr. Ladyman: The estimate for the cost of introducing free personal care was prepared by Department of Health economists using a variety of data and assumptions. An explanatory note has been placed in the Library.

Mental Health

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the relationship between the criminal guardianship powers in the Mental Health Act 1983 and the community treatment orders proposed in the Draft Mental Health Bill 2002. [149798]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Like the guardianship order, the proposed power—that the courts would make a mental health order without requiring residence in hospital—could enable people who needed treatment subject to sanction to receive it without resort to detention in hospital. Unlike the guardianship order, the proposed power would enable the admission of the person to hospital for compulsory treatment in the event of that becoming necessary for his own health or safety or that of others.

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the target groups of people with mental health problems who will be helped by the introduction of community treatment orders. [149800]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The provisions in the draft Mental Health Bill for formal powers to be used in the community are based on the principle of least restriction. When treating someone for mental disorder under formal powers, the restriction of their liberty should be the minimum necessary, taking into account all their circumstances and the need to protect themselves or others. The conditions setting out the circumstances in which formal powers may be used, must always be satisfied, whether treatment is to be provided in hospital or in the community. The power to impose requirements on patients in the community will however, in some circumstances, avoid patients having to go to hospital if appropriate alternative arrangements can be made.

The most important group that it is intended that these powers would be used for is people who have a history of admission to hospital, improvement and discharge, followed by relapse (known as "revolving door" patients). Currently there may be no alternative to renewed admission to hospital. Where someone is well known to services it may not be necessary for them to be reassessed and treated in hospital. Treatment under a regime of conditions and requirements in the community may be more appropriate and avoid the distress of repeated unplanned admissions to hospital.

These powers would also be available for those whose mental condition has improved while being treated under compulsion in hospital and for whom formal treatment in the community would provide a supportive transition, helping to prevent patients relapsing on discharge from hospital. There may also be other individual cases in which treatment under compulsion in the community would be more appropriate.

Formal treatment in the community will also be an option for the Court to consider for mentally disordered offenders. It is intended that convicted offenders who require treatment for mental disorder could benefit if the court is satisfied that they do not need to be detained and clinicians confirm that treatment appropriate for the individual is available in the community.

The decision that compulsory treatment in the community is appropriate should always be based on the careful assessment of what is the most suitable way to treat and care for individual patients, taking into account all the circumstances of each individual case.

National Service Framework for Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish the National Service Framework for children. [152112]

Dr. Ladyman: The national service framework for children, young people and maternity services will be published later this year.

Osteoporosis

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what therapies other than Raloxifen will be provided by the NHS to patients suffering from osteoporosis. [151119]

Dr. Ladyman: There are a wide range of treatments available for patients suffering from osteoporosis. Some prevent bone breakdown and stimulate new bone formation while others help maintain bone density and reduce fracture rates. Individuals will receive treatment which best meets their needs.

Rainbows Children's Hospice (Leicestershire)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will visit Rainbows Children's Hospice in Leicestershire. [151663]

Dr. Ladyman: Minister will be pleased to consider an invitation to visit from the Rainbows Children's Hospice in Leicestershire.

Telephone Masts

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to set up a public inquiry into the health effects of G3 technology telephone masts; [147054]

(2) if he will make a statement on the health effects of G3 technology telephone masts. [147059]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Government advice on mobile phones and health is based on the Stewart Report, issued in May 2000 (www.iegmp.org.uk). In respect of base stations they concluded:

> The balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guidelines.

The operators of mobile telephone equipment including 3rd Generation (3G) systems should ensure that public exposure does not exceed the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection. Measurements undertaken by the Radiocommunications Agency, now part of OFCOM (www.ofcom.org.uk/static/archive/ra/rahome.htm), have confirmed that public exposures are very much lower than the international guidelines.

The National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) has statutory responsibility for providing overall advice on health risks from exposure to electromagnetic fields including radio waves. Research published since the Stewart Report, including research on 3G effects, has been reviewed by the NRPB's Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation. Their review was announced on 14 January 2004 and concludes that

> "The weight of evidence now available does not suggest that there are adverse health effects from exposures to RF (radiofrequency) fields below guideline levels, but the published research on RF exposures and health has limitations, and mobile phones have only been in widespread use for a relatively short time."

The report is available on the NRPB web site at: http://www.nrpb.org./ review/docs nrpb/absdl4–2.htm. Copies have been placed in the Library.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Extradition

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are taken to satisfy district judges that each person consenting to extradition has had access to legal advice. [150341]

Mr. Leslie: Sections 45 and 127 of the Extradition Act 2003 state that a person may not give his consent to extradition unless he is legally represented. However, a sane person cannot be compelled to take legal advice if they do not wish it.

All defendants who waive legal advice either have the means, or have been offered legal aid, to obtain it, but have taken a decision not to do so. The Senior District Judge at Bow Street Magistrates Court has confirmed that no District Judge would permit a defendant to waive legal advice without satisfying him or herself that this requirement is met, and that the defendant has full understanding of the consequences of his decision.

In practice, all defendants in extradition proceedings are represented, either by their own solicitor, or by the court's duty solicitor, to whom they will have access.

Burglary

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs in how many and what proportion of cases resulting in convictions for *(a)* house burglary and *(b)* aggravated house burglary, bail was granted before conviction in each of the last six years. [152119]

Mr. Leslie: The number and proportion of defendants convicted in the Crown Court of either burglary or aggravated burglary of a dwelling, and who had been committed on bail by the magistrates' court are provided in the following table.

Convictions for offences of burglary and aggravated burglary in dwellings, and those defendants committed on bail by the magistrates' court, in the Crown Court, 1998–2003

	Convicted		Committed on bail		Proportion (per cent.)	
Year	Burglary	Aggravated burglary	Burglary	Aggravated burglary	Burglary	Aggravated burglary
1998	8,995	318	4,268	115	47.4	36.2
1999	8,266	271	3,746	108	45.3	39.9
2000	7,546	255	3,573	79	47.3	31.0
2001	6,435	265	3,007	99	46.7	37.4
2002	6,905	341	3,189	107	46.2	31.4
2003	7,061	301	3,232	75	45.8	24.9

Note:
Figures relate to number of defendants

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many and what proportion of convictions for *(a)* burglary of a house and *(b)* aggravated burglary of a house resulted in a gaol sentence in each of the last six years. [152120]

Mr. Leslie: The number and proportion of defendants convicted of either burglary or aggravated burglary of a dwelling, and who received a custodial sentence in each of the last six years are provided in the following table.

Convictions and custodial sentences for offences of burglary and aggravated burglary in dwellings, in the Crown Court, 1998–2003

	Convicted		Custodial sentence		Proportion (per cent.)	
Year	Burglary	Aggravated burglary	Burglary	Aggravated burglary	Burglary	Aggravated burglary
1998	8,995	318	6,389	302	71.0	95.0
1999	8,266	271	6,070	270	73.4	99.6
2000	7,546	255	5,309	238	70.4	93.3
2001	6,435	265	4,564	261	70.9	98.5
2002	6,905	341	4,730	322	68.5	94.4
2003	7,061	301	4,530	264	64.2	87.7

Note:
Figures relate to number of defendants

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he will reply to the letter of 29 August 2003 from the hon. Member for Northavon, forwarded to him by the Department for Work and Pensions, reference 142208, regarding Mr. Dicker. [151710]

Mr. Lammy: I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what cost savings have been made in the Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151052]

Mr. Leslie: My Department established a centre of excellence covering all programmes and projects, including IT and procurement programmes and projects, in June 2003. The centre of excellence reviewed all pre-existing programmes and projects in October 2003 and identified £6.9 million savings that were made immediately. Further savings and other cost benefits will not accrue until planned improvements begin to take effect.

Legal Aid

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent changes have been made to the provision of public funding to suspects before charge. [150792]

Mr. Lammy: No changes have been made to the provision of Criminal Defence Service (formerly criminal legal aid) funding to suspects before charge. However the Department for Constitutional Affairs consulted last year on proposals to improve value for money in the CDS and will shortly be announcing the result of the consultation.

Public Bodies (Membership)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who the members of the *(a)* Imperial College Governing Body, *(b)* Court of UMIST, *(c)* Court of the University of Hull, *(d)* Court of the University of Sussex and *(e)* Court of the University of Ulster were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151342]

Mr. Leslie: The Privy Council appointees for the bodies mentioned and their terms of office are set out as follows:

Imperial College—term of office 4 years:

Field Marshall Lord Vincent
Trevor Phillips OBE
Ms Charlotte L. Chothia
Balram Gidoomal
Sir Alastair Morton
Sir Peter Williams CBE

UMIST—term of office 3 years:

Denis Robson
Miss Dawn Gibbins MBE
Geoffrey Galley
Keith Beckett

University of Hull—term of office 3 years:

Lord Haskins

John Trebble

Michael Hollingbery

University of Sussex—term of office 3 years:

Mark Burrell

Mrs. Gail Rebuck

James Brathwaite CBE

University of Ulster—term of office 4 years:

The Lord Glentoran CBE

Mrs. Bernadette Grant

How Universities remunerate the members of their councils is not a matter for the Privy Council Office, but this information should be available from the bodies themselves.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who the members of the *(a)* Court of Victoria University of Manchester, *(b)* General Medical Council, *(c)* Royal Council of Veterinary Surgeons and *(d)* Royal College of Court were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151457]

Mr. Leslie: The Privy Council appointees for the bodies mentioned and their terms of office are set out as follows:

Victoria University of Manchester—term of office three years

Dame Valerie Strachan DCB

Dr. Inayat Khan Babar

Colonel John Bradford Timmins QBE TD JP

Ms Dawn Peters

Anthony Nixon

General Medical Council—term of office four years

Kevin Baron MP

The Very Reverend Graham Forbes

Robert Nicholls

Ruth Evans

Dr. Arun Midha

Mrs. Patricia Moberly

David Bean

Sir Michael Buckley

Mrs. Gillian Camm

Stuart Heatherington

Robin McLeod

Dr. Joan Martin

Fiona Peel

Ann Robinson

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons—term of office four years

James M. Scudamore

F. Brian Jennings

Mr. Martyn Jones MP

Mrs. Barbara Saunders

Royal College of Art—term of office three years

Dr. Kenneth Grange CBE

How these bodies remunerate the members of their councils is not a matter for the Privy Council Office, but this information should be available from the bodies themselves.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Heathfield Transmitter

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects that work on the Heathfield Transmitter will take place; and if she will make a statement. [152099]

Estelle Morris: The responsibility to convert the transmitter network to digital lies with broadcasters. As there are not enough frequencies to broadcast both analogue and digital signals with sufficient power levels throughout the country, digital reception will not be available in Eastbourne before digital switchover. We are committed to switchover, which we believe could be achieved between 2006 and 2010, but we are not yet in a position to decide a firm timetable.

Heritage Lottery Funding (Trafford)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Heritage Lottery funding has been awarded in the Trafford Metropolitan Council area in each of the last five years. [151125]

Estelle Morris: The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded the following in the Trafford Metropolitan Council area in each of the last five years:

Financial year	£
1997–98	225,000
1998–99	32,800
1999–2000	nil
2000–01	91,000
2001–02	25,000
2002–03	nil

TREASURY

R and D Tax Credits

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1044W, on research and development tax credits, how many claims for research and development tax credits from companies have been *(a)* accepted and *(b)* rejected by the Inland Revenue; and if he will make a statement. [151786]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The figure of over 8,000 claims given in the first of my answers of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1044W, represents the number of Corporation Tax Self Assessment returns where companies have claimed research and development tax credits. The number of claims that have been adjusted following an inquiry by Inland Revenue is not available.

Business Tax Credits

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses notified the Inland Revenue of their intention to claim tax credits in future financial years when trading at a profit as a result of trading

losses, in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what the total sum of tax credits so notified was. [152184]

Ruth Kelly: Loss making small companies can in certain circumstances choose to either claim payable credits under the research and development tax credit scheme or instead claim enhanced tax relief in future accounting periods.

Information on the number of such companies that have chosen to claim the enhanced tax relief and the amount of this relief is not available.

Gangmasters (Agriculture)

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much in unpaid *(a)* income tax and *(b)* national insurance contributions has been recovered from gangmasters operating in the UK's agricultural sector since 1994. [152097]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue does not keep a separate record of recoveries of unpaid income tax and National Insurance Contributions from agricultural gangmasters. It would be disproportionately expensive to provide it.

Customs and Excise

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what *(a)* budgets have been agreed and *(b)* costs have been incurred in fulfilling HM Customs and Excise obligations in respect of ports and airports (i) in the south east of England and (ii) elsewhere for each of the last six years for which records are available; [150983]

(2) how much HM Customs and Excise has spent on *(a)* travel, *(b)* accommodation, *(c)* subsistence and *(d)* other costs in respect of the establishment of mobile teams to support its work at ports and airports in (i) the south east of England and (ii) elsewhere for each of the last six years for which records are available; [150984]

(3) what budget has been agreed for the creation of mobile Customs and Excise teams to cover ports and airports; and how much has been budgeted for *(a)* travel costs, *(b)* accommodation, *(c)* subsistence allowance and *(d)* other costs related to the expense of establishing the service and re-deploying staff. [150987]

John Healey *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* HM Customs and Excise reorganised in April 2001, creating a Law Enforcement (LE) arm of approximately 7,500 officers. LE staff perform the majority of Customs operational activity at ports and airports in the UK. One of the aims of this restructuring and the subsequent LE business plan for 2003 to 2006 is to build a more intelligence-led, mobile and flexible workforce. The south region includes the south-east, south-west and central southern England.

The following table gives the authorised expenditure of the LE organisation on salaries, travel and subsistence and other running costs. These costs exclude the intelligence operational arm which is not managed on a comparable regional basis. Comparative data are not available for the years prior to the creation of Law Enforcement.

£ million

	Authorised regional spend	*of which: Travel and subsistence*[1]
2001–02 outturn		
South region	62.9	2.3
Elsewhere	148.9	7.7
2002–03 outturn		
South region	63.9	2.3
Elsewhere	144.3	8.4
2003–04 forecast		
South region	62.4	2.5
Elsewhere	143.7	8.2

[1] Includes costs for travel, temporary accommodation and subsistence costs.

Note:
Separate figures are not available in the format requested.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Acting Chairman of HM Customs and Excise will reply to the letter of 27 October 2003 from the hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham about the Chalfont St. Giles Bowling Club. [152185]

John Healey: Customs and Excise replied to the hon. Member's letter on 29 January 2004.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what targets have been set for the answering of correspondence by the Inland Revenue. [151836]

Dawn Primarolo: The targets for post in local tax areas in 2003–04 are:

80 per cent. of post worked within 15 working days.

95 per cent. of post worked within 40 working days.

80 per cent. of post worked within 15 working days dealt with completely and correctly.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much correspondence to the Inland Revenue at present remains unanswered after *(a)* three, *(b)* six and *(c)* nine months. [151837]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue does not keep records on this basis. The current target for local tax areas is to work 80 per cent. of post (which includes correspondence and other items) within 15 working days and 95 per cent. of post within 40 working days.

Labour Productivity Levels

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action the Government is planning to improve labour productivity levels. [151478]

John Healey: The Government are committed to raising the rate of UK productivity growth over the economic cycle, improving competitiveness and narrowing the productivity gap with the US, France and Germany. The Government's approach to raising productivity is set out in "Productivity in the UK: The Evidence and the Government's Approach", which was published alongside the 2000 pre-Budget Report.

The Government reports on steps to increase productivity in every Budget and pre-Budget Report. Recent key steps include the introduction of the

Enterprise Act 2002, the introduction of R&D tax credits, the reduction of corporation tax rates, implementation of major reforms to capital gains tax, proposals for new Enterprise Capital Funds to increase venture capital investment for small businesses with high-growth potential, increased investment to raise standards in education and to improve adult skills, and a comprehensive review of capital markets through the Myners, Sandler and Higgs reviews.

Foreign Earnings Deduction

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the shipping industry to discuss plans to prevent workers on offshore installations from receiving the foreign earnings deduction benefit; and if he will make a statement. [151603]

Dawn Primarolo: The intention of Foreign Earnings Deduction (FED) is to encourage seafarers to work on UK ships which can be called upon in time of conflict. Some workers on offshore installations are exploiting FED to seek a tax relief that was never intended for them. As announced in the pre-Budget Report, we will be introducing amendments to the legislation to make it clear that workers on offshore installations are not entitled to this relief and officials have begun discussions with industry representatives.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to limit the entitlement to foreign earnings deductions for seafarers serving on ships registered in the UK or other EU countries; and what assessment his Department has made of the impact such a change would have on the UK shipping sector. [151605]

Dawn Primarolo: In the pre-Budget Report (Cm 6042), it was announced that there would be changes in the Foreign Earnings Deduction to prevent workers on offshore installations claiming the relief. Any changes beyond this would follow consultation with the shipping industry and trade unions and be consistent with the Government's continuing support for the UK shipping industry.

Pension Funds

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the levels of public sector pension fund deficits. [150457]

Mr. Boateng: Information is not held centrally on all the pension schemes of public sector employers, which include schemes provided by public corporations and other bodies in addition to the major schemes established by statute for public service occupations. Among the major statutory schemes those for the civil service, NHS, teachers, police, fire and armed forces are unfunded and the only major public service scheme that has funds is the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The LGPS is supported by individual funds held at local level. The last triennial valuations of these funds for England and Wales were conducted in 2001 and showed an actuarial value of aggregate assets of £85.3 billion being held against liabilities of £91.5 billion, giving a deficit of £6.2 billion. All the LGPS funds met the solvency requirements of the scheme.

Project ASPIRE

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his Answer of 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 141W, on Project ASPIRE, on what date Inland Revenue first held a meeting to which it invited all suppliers with whom it was engaging in the market-making exercise for Project ASPIRE; and which of the suppliers did not attend. [152231]

Dawn Primarolo: As I stated in my answer of 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 140W, the Inland Revenue actively engaged with 14 suppliers in the course of the market-making exercise for Project ASPIRE. My answer provided the names of these companies. These suppliers were offered initial meetings with the Inland Revenue, and these took place during November and December 2001. None of the suppliers directly approached by the Inland Revenue, as part of this exercise, refused the opportunity to discuss the ASPIRE competition.

An open meeting was held for all interested suppliers on 7 March 2002, which was attended by 42 potential suppliers. No one supplier was directly approached for this meeting, instead the event was advertised through the Inland Revenue's website.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 803W, who the board member responsible for Mr. John Yard's division was; and when he commenced planning for project ASPIRE. [152233]

Dawn Primarolo: As I stated in my answer of 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 803W, planning for the ASPIRE project began in January 2001. The Board member responsible for Business Services at that time was Tim Flesher, the Inland Revenue's Deputy Chairman. After Tim Flesher moved to another Government Department in April 2003, Helen Ghosh took on Board level responsibility for Business Services.

Sports Facilities

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the VAT receipts that would accrue to the Treasury from the construction of new sports facilities associated with the 2012 Olympic bid. [151976]

Ruth Kelly: No estimate has been made. By long-standing convention, HM Customs and Excise does not publish details of the VAT collected from individual bodies or in respect of individual transactions. It is for individual bodies to publish any such information as appropriate to their reporting obligations. All construction projects undertaken in the UK are subject to the same set of VAT rules laid out in the VAT Act 1994.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what level of VAT receipts the Treasury has received from the construction of sports facilities for each year since 1997. [151977]

Ruth Kelly: HM Customs and Excise are unable to calculate VAT receipts from the construction of sports facilities. It is not possible to identify specific sources of VAT revenue from VAT returns. Any data available on expenditure on such construction projects would not be sufficient to estimate relevant VAT receipts as the degree to which VAT is due and reclaimable on the construction of sports facilities will vary.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to his Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149335]

Ruth Kelly: HM Treasury, together with the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise, actively promote the better regulation agenda and the use of sunsetting provisions where appropriate.

The need for any such provision is considered on a case-by-case basis. Every Finance Act, for example, contains some provisions which apply only for the purposes of the particular tax year to which it relates, and accordingly, these provisions may be considered to be sunset provisions.

Particular cases of Finance Act sunsetting provisions are section 107(5) of the Finance Act 2001 (which incorporated a sunset provision applicable to that section only) and section 112 of the Finance Act 2003 (which contains a time-limited power, which was exercisable only before the implementation of Part 4 of that Act on 1 December 2003, to amend the provisions of that Part).

Some of the transitional provisions connected with the coming into force of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 ceased to have effect on a certain date.

Taxable Income

Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total value was of the taxable income from employment in each of the last three financial years for which figures are available. [151704]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest information is contained in table 3.6 on the Inland Revenue website http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/pi_t06_1.htm. For earlier financial years I refer my hon. Friend to paper copies of Inland Revenue Statistics table 3.6 which are available in the House of Commons Library. These estimates are based upon the Survey of Personal Incomes.

Thalidomide Victims

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress is being made in discussions with the Thalidomide Trust with regard to the tax treatment of payments to victims. [151606]

Dawn Primarolo: Discussions between the trustees of the Thalidomide Trust and officials of the Inland Revenue about the tax treatment of payments to beneficiaries of the trust are continuing. No conclusion has yet been reached.

DEFENCE

Air Defence Destroyers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* current and *(b)* planned requirements are for the number of air defence destroyers. [150870]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently 11 Royal Navy Type 42 air defence destroyers. There are six Type 45 destroyers currently on order. Decisions about further orders of Type 45s are not expected until the middle of this decade.

Aircraft Carriers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the planned paying-off dates are for each of the fleet's aircraft carriers. [150871]

Mr. Ingram: The planned decommissioning dates for the Royal Navy's Invincible class aircraft carriers are listed as follows:

HMS Invincible: 2010

HMS Illustrious: 2012

HMS Ark Royal: 2013

Dismounted Countermine Capability Programme

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on the Army's proposed Dismounted Countermine Capability programme. [149540]

Mr. Ingram: The Dismounted Countermine Capability (DCMC) programme is intended to provide dismounted personnel with an improved capability to locate and deal with anti personnel (AP) and anti tank (AT) mines. DCMC seeks to provide a solution based on the need to detect mines, mark individual mines and areas of mine contamination, neutralise individual mines, and communicate information about these actions to other forces on the battlefield.

DCMC gained Initial Gate approval in March 2003. In August 2003, following a competitive downselection, Thales Missile Electronics was awarded a contract to complete a Study Assessment Programme. Initial work suggests that a technological answer to the problem of detecting minimum metal and non metallic mines (modern mines made from plastics and other non metal materials) is likely to be feasible.

HMS Bridport

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for how long HMS Bridport was laid up; and for what reason. [150865]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Bridport has been in a state of extended readiness since March 2002. This was a programming decision made as part of the routine management of the fleet.

HMS Enterprise

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what elements of the propulsion system of HMS Enterprise have been transferred to HMS Echo;

and whether his Department is seeking compensation from the contractor following technical problems with HMS Enterprise. [150859]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Enterprise's Azipod Propulsors were transferred to HMS Echo in October 2003 in order to expedite her entry into service with the Royal Navy. The Department and Prime Contractor are currently negotiating over liability and compensation for the problems that gave rise to this transfer.

Iraq

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many cluster bombs have been defused in Iraq by bomb disposal squads since 1 May 2003; and if he will make a statement. [148296]

Mr. Ingram: To date around 675,000 munitions have been cleared in the UK area of responsibility. We do not record individual types of munitions cleared.

Lieutenant Lewis Page

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Lieutenant Lewis Page was given authorisation while a serving officer to publish an article in *Prospect* magazine. [150861]

Mr. Caplin: Lieutenant Page was not properly authorised to publish this article.

RAF Bicester

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many accidents there were at RAF Bicester in the last five years; how many involved gliders or training aircraft; and if he will make a statement. [147964]

Mr. Caplin: The following table details incidents that have occurred at RAF Bicester over the last five years. The table includes incidents involving other users of the airfield, notably Oxford University Gliding Club. All the incidents occurred within the confines of Bicester airfield and none resulted in any injuries.

SER No	*Date*	*Agency*	*Glider type*	*Description of incident*
1.	31 May 1998	Oxford University GC	Oxford University GC K21	Ground incident when winch cable snagged glider. Minor damage to glider, but no injuries.
2.	11 June 1999	Joint Service Adventurous Training Gliding	RAF Gliding and Soaring Association K21	Ground loop on landing when wing tip makes contact with ground. Minor damage to glider, but no injuries.
3.	11 May 2001	Oxford University GC	Oxford University GC K18	Ground incident in that tractor ran over wingtip. Minor damage to glider, but no injuries.
4.	23 May 2001	Oxford University GC	Oxford University GC K21	Early solo student allowed undershoot to develop, clipping a tree resulting in a ground loop (See Ser No 2). Major damage to glider, but no injuries.
5.	23 May 2001	Joint Service Adventurous Training Gliding	RAF Gliding and Soaring Association K21	Heavy landing. Minor damage to glider, but no injuries.
6.	25 May 2003	British Gliding Association Visitor	Discus	Ground incident where glider was towed into wingtip contact with another glider. Minor damage to one of the gliders, but no injuries.
7.	25 August 2003	Oxford University GC	RAF Gliding and Soaring Association Astir CS GRP	Pilot allowed undershoot to develop. Glider ploughed through hedge onto the airfield. Major damage to glider and hedge, but no injuries.

Reservists

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists mobilised for operational service under *(a)* Operation Telic 1 and *(b)* Operation Telic 2 under the provisions of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 have lost their jobs since returning from service; what his Department did to support them in retaining their employment rights; and if he will make a statement. [151426]

Mr. Caplin: There is no requirement for reservists to provide the information requested to the Ministry of Defence. There is, therefore, no comprehensive record of the numbers of reservists who may have lost their civilian job. However, indications are that civilian employers have been very supportive of reservists and, of over 8,600 reservists called-out to support Op Telic, we are aware of only 14 individuals who have brought cases under the 1985 Act.

The Ministry of Defence provides detailed advice to demobilising reservists to ensure that they are aware of their legal right to reclaim their civilian employment. The Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers (SaBRE) campaign team provides a help line and a website which gives additional information and advice. Also, each Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (RFCA) has an Employment Support Executive who is able to offer advice and assistance to reservists who are experiencing problems returning to their civilian employment.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what provision is being made to ensure that life insurance and other financial services made available to reservists being mobilised for operational service in Iraq are of a similar standard and as affordable as those offered to reservists mobilised under Operation Telic 1; and if he will make a statement. [151427]

Mr. Caplin: The only financial service specifically for reservists which MOD facilitates is RPAX, which provide personal accident and life cover—there is a similar product, PAX, for regulars. RPAX was available to reservists mobilised under Operation Telic 1, and is still available now. Information about RPAX was then and still is advised to individual reservists and units.

Scottish Regiments

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Scottish Regiments; what their authorised strength was; and how many vacancies there were in each year since 1997. [150398]

Mr. Caplin: The establishment, trained strength and difference, of each of the Scottish Regiments, are as follows:

Highlanders

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	660	615	-45
1998	660	585	-75
1999	660	505	-155
2000	660	500	-160
2001	610	495	-115
2002[1]	665	520	-145
2003[1]	625	520	-105

[1] Strength totals for 2002 and 2003 exclude Gurkhas attached to the regiment: 100 in 2002, and 110 in 2003.

Black Watch

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	595	515	-80
1998	595	540	-55
1999	595	510	-85
2000	705	510	-195
2001	670	565	-105
2002	675	535	-140
2003	675	585	-90

Note:
Black Watch totals exclude BW LAD REME.

Royal Scots

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	665	495	-170
1998	665	510	-155
1999	665	470	-195
2000	595	470	-125
2001	610	515	-95
2002	620	495	-125
2003	620	525	-95

Royal Highland Fusiliers

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	705	595	-110
1998	705	620	-85
1999	705	580	-125
2000	595	625	30
2001	605	530	-75
2002	620	530	-90
2003	620	540	-80

King's Own Scottish Borderers

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	595	545	-50
1998	595	565	-30
1999	595	505	-90
2000	595	550	-45
2001	640	585	-55
2002	620	645	25
2003	665	630	-35

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	595	555	-40
1998	595	595	0
1999	595	600	5
2000	595	600	5
2001	610	590	-20
2002	620	580	-40
2003	625	575	-50

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders

Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	410	385	-25
1998	410	370	-40
1999	410	370	-40
2000	410	405	-5
2001	500	415	-85
2002	495	440	-55
2003	500	475	-25

Note:
RSDG totals exclude LAD REME.

Scots Guards

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	595	530	-65
1998	595	520	-75
1999	595	530	-65
2000	595	560	-35
2001	610	645	35
2002	625	565	-60
2003	625	565	-60

F Coy Scots Guards

	Establishment	Trained strength	Difference
1997	105	85	-20
1998	105	100	-5
1999	105	95	-10
2000	105	115	10
2001	105	100	-5
2002	105	115	10
2003	110	115	5

Notes:
1. The figures are at 1 January each year.
2. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
3. Totals are for Regular Army Officers and Soldiers.
4. FTRS have been excluded.
5. Totals include members of other Arms/Services attached to the regiment but exclude the 2 REME LADs attached to BW and SDG.
6. Historical establishments for F Coy Scots Gds to be confirmed.

Service Medals

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the General Service Medal with Canal Zone clasp will be awarded to service men and women in the constituency of the hon. Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey. [152068]

Mr. Caplin: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 5 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 634W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Chorley (Mr. Hoyle).

Trident Programme

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what circumstances the Government would *(a)* deploy Trident nuclear weapons and *(b)* deploy Trident nuclear missiles on a first strike basis. [151597]

Mr. Hoon: As the Government have made clear on many occasions, we would be prepared to use nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances of self-defence. As our overall strategy is to ensure uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the exact nature of our response, and thus to maintain effective deterrence, we do not define the exact circumstances under which we would be prepared to use nuclear weapons.

We would not use our weapons, whether conventional or nuclear, contrary to international law.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which threats the UK's Trident nuclear weapons are *(a)* intended to deter and *(b)* targeted against. [151598]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 3.11 of the Defence White Paper published in December 2003 (Cm 6041). The UK's nuclear weapons are not targeted at any country.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the role of the Trident programme is in combating international terrorism. [151599]

Mr. Hoon: As the Government have made clear on many occasions, we would be prepared to use nuclear weapons only in extreme circumstances of self-defence. I also refer the hon. Member to paragraph 21 of the SDR New Chapter, published in July 2002 (Cm 5566 vol. 1), where we stated that:

> 'The UK's nuclear weapons have a continuing use as a means of deterring major strategic military threats, and they have a continuing role in guaranteeing the ultimate security of the UK. But we also want it to be clear, particularly to the leaders of states of concern and terrorist organisations, that all our forces play a part in deterrence, and that we have a broad range of responses available.'

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system is due to come to the end of its service period; when a decision is due on whether to commission a new UK nuclear weapons system to replace the Trident programme when it comes to the end of its service period; and what consultation will be undertaken in advance of a decision on replacement. [151702]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 3.11 of the Defence White Paper published in December 2003 (Cm 6041). Any decision on the UK's future nuclear deterrent capability will be open to scrutiny and debate in the normal way.

Unexploded Cluster Bombs

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* adults and *(b)* children under 16 have been (i) killed and (ii) maimed by unexploded cluster bombs dropped by British aircraft in (A) Kosovo, (B) Afghanistan and (C) Iraq since their invasion by coalition forces. [145494]

Mr. Ingram: UK aircraft have not dropped cluster bombs in Afghanistan.

We have no viable means of ascertaining the information for either Kosovo or Iraq.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Civil Servants (Disabled People)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will set out the number of employees in his Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148992]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department is an active member of the Cabinet Office led Civil Service Disability Working Group, which was set up in January 2003 to look at disability collection issues, monitoring and non-declaration.

Over 5 per cent. (280) of staff employed in my Department have recorded a disability.

Information on the numbers by type of disability is set out in the table. Details are not published where the numbers are below five in order to protect the privacy of the individual, in line with Exemption 12 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Disability type	*Number*
Hearing impairment	43
Learning difficulties	7
Mental illness	5
Mobility impairment	47
Physical coordination difficulties	5
Reduced physical capacity	51
Visual impairment	20
Unknown disability	66

The statistics exclude DfES staff in the Government Office network with a recorded disability where a breakdown by disability type could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Global Gateway for Learning

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on development of the Global Gateway for Learning since the Commonwealth Education Ministers' Conference in October 2003. [151114]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Development of the Global Gateway has continued on schedule since last October. The Global Gateway will be a new one-stop-shop website for UK schools on all aspects of international education. It will also enable UK schools and schools from across the world to develop effective partnerships (e.g. joint curriculum projects, professional development, collaborative opportunities etc.) through a school linking facility. I am pleased to announce that I will formally launch the website on 10 February 2004.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151051]

Mr. Charles Clarke: A Centre of Excellence in Programme and Project Management was established

within the Department for Education and Skills in August 2002, to improve the planning and management of improvements in the education system. In June 2003, its remit was extended to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition based programmes and projects (including those concerned with procuring IT). As cost benefits for IT procurements will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings. All Centres of Excellence are currently developing future plans and as part of this process methods for measuring savings are being worked out.

Jenny Gray

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* position and *(b)* role is of Jenny Gray, a civil servant in his Department. [151093]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* It is not our policy to comment on the position of individual civil servants.

University for Industry

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which targets have been set by Government for the University for Industry; and what progress has been made in meeting them. [150777]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Stretching targets are agreed annually between my Department and Ufi. They are set at challenging levels and are designed to build upon the achievements of previous years and to maintain Ufi's rapid progress.

The attached table (Annex 1) shows the targets agreed for 2003–04 and the progress made towards them by 31 December 2003.

Annex 1

	Definition	*2003–04 Target*	*Position at 31 December 2003*
Number of Learners	The total number of learners starting learndirect courses in 2003–04.	450,000 learners	350,953
Number of enrolments	The total number of enrolments on learndirect courses in 2003–04	1 million enrolments	602,308
New learners	60 per cent. of learners starting their first learndirect course are 'new learners' (i.e. learners that have not engaged in any other learning in the three years prior to registering with learndirect	60 per cent. of learners	50 per cent.
Workforce Development (1) SMEs	Numbers of SMEs sponsoring one or more of their employers on learndirect courses	70,000 SMEs engaged	34,907
Workforce Development (2) SMEs	Number of employees in SMEs enrolling on learndirect courses	200,000 enrolments on learndirect courses	118,575
Course Portfolio Diversification Skills for Life achievement	Number of Business and Management course enrolments Refers only to achievement of qualifications in England that can be counted towards the Government's 750,000 PSA Skills for Life Target	112,000 enrolments 8,000 achievements	90,167 541
Income generation	Ufi will generate £3.7 million from the sale of courses unsubsidised with public money to employers and to individuals	£3.7 million	£995,018
LSC Budget Management	Ufi will use its best endeavours to use all the LSC funding allocated for learndirect provision	By end 31 March 2004, no less than £151 million of the £159.5 million made available by the LSC for learndirect provision in the financial year 2003–04 shall have been used for the funding of learndirect provision	£104,338,468
Quality: Hubs and Centres	In 2003–04 Ufi/learndirect will achieve an average inspection grade awarded by the Adult Learning Inspectorate of 2.5	Average ALI inspection grade of 2.5	2.89
Quality: Learner Satisfaction Users of the learndirect Information and Advice Service	The percentage of learners satisfied with learndirect A total of number of helpline callers, web users, emails received and responded to and webchats held	87 per cent. 4.7 million	85 per cent. 3,726,801
Callers from within Government target range	Calls received by learndirect call centres from callers who are eligible to count towards the Government's level 2 PSA target	550,000	240,304
Quality Information and Advice Service	Percentage canvassed through a rolling customer satisfaction survey who agreed with the statement: "the overall quality of the service was good" (applicable to all IAS users as defined by agreed volume targets)	87 per cent.	93 per cent.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. R. ul Haque Malik; [149546]

(2) when he will reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to R. ul Haque Malik. [151227]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 23 January.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 16 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Ammar Marfani; [149552]

(2) when he will reply to the letter to him dated 16 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Ammar Marfani. [151229]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 26 January.

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge of 8 January. [151905]

Mr. Mullin: I replied to my hon. Friend's letter of 8 January on 29 January, explaining the delay, advising that the matters he raised were the responsibility of the Home Office and that I had forwarded his letter to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State with responsibility for Citizenship, Immigration and Counter-Terrorism at the Home Office (Beverly Hughes) with a request that it be replied to urgently.

Iraq

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government have asked the state from which they obtained intelligence on Iraq's alleged attempt to procure uranium from Africa if they may share that intelligence with *(a)* the United States Administration and *(b)* other governments. [151301]

Mr. Straw: The Government asked the originators of the intelligence that Iraq sought the supply of uranium from Africa to discuss the issue with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Government understand this was done shortly before the IAEA report of 7 March 2003. I am withholding further details of intelligence exchanges with allies under Exemption 1(c) of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

North Korea

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made with proposals for North Korean students to come to the United Kingdom for cultural and language education to increase links at a sub-governmental level. [151900]

Mr. Rammell: The Government have no objection to students from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) studying language and culture courses in the UK. Through our policy of engagement with DPRK, we encourage the country to increase its citizens' exposure to the outside world. Our on-going programme of educational activity with DPRK includes Foreign and Commonwealth Office-funded (FCO), UK-based English language courses for DPRK officials, and an FCO-sponsored/British Council-managed English language course for teachers and students in universities in Pyongyang. We also provide educational materials to schools and universities in DPRK.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to secure greater access for western non-governmental organisations into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. [151901]

Mr. Rammell: We regularly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) authorities to allow freer and wider access to and within DPRK for western non-governmental organisations (NGOs). We also supported the resolution adopted by the 2003 UN Commission on Human Rights, which calls for free and unimpeded access for NGOs to all parts of DPRK.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requests the Government have made to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on access for international inspectors to their prison system. [151902]

Mr. Rammell: We have raised the issue of prison camps in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) with the DPRK authorities on a number of occasions, through our embassy in Pyongyang and the DPRK embassy in London. We encourage the DPRK Government to allow access to independent international inspectors to verify the reports of human rights violations in their prison system. Requests have been made for access by western diplomats to prisons, but these have yet to be granted.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to provide protection for economic and political refugees who leave the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and are hiding in China. [151903]

Mr. Rammell: We regularly raise the issue of North Korean refugees with the Chinese, including at the biannual UK/China Human Rights Dialogue. At the last round of the Dialogue, on 10–11 November 2003, we urged China to allow the UNHCR access to the border areas and to observe its obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

We will continue to encourage greater co-operation between China and UNHCR on this issue.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to assist aid workers in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to obtain timely and unimpeded access to distribute food aid to those people most in need. [151904]

Mr. Rammell: Most food aid in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is distributed by the World Food Programme (WFP), a UN agency. We work closely with WFP and the resident aid community, and embassy staff travel frequently with WFP on their monitoring missions. We deplore restrictions placed on WFP by the DPRK authorities which limit their monitoring of food aid in many areas of DPRK, and we regularly urge the DPRK authorities to grant WFP full, unrestricted access to all parts of the country. Although the situation is not satisfactory, we welcome WFP reports of improvements in monitoring, access and food distribution systems.

Visas

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what conditions relate to the issuing of visas to nationals of countries in the Indian sub-continent. [151981]

Mr. Mullin: All entry clearance applications are considered against the relevant requirements of the United Kingdom's Immigration Rules which state that applicants must satisfy an Entry Clearance Officer, on the balance of probabilities, that they meet the requirements of these Rules in the category that they apply. The Rules are applied equally throughout the world, regardless of the nationality of an applicant or the country in which the application is made.

PRIME MINISTER

Officials' Meetings

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister when and where his officials last met officials from the Egyptian Government. [152187]

The Prime Minister: The British ambassador, officials from the embassy and other officials meet representatives of the Egyptian Government on a regular basis, in Egypt and in international forums.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Broadband Stakeholder Group

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will publish her proposals for a new consultative body to replace the Broadband Stakeholder Group. [151476]

Mr. Timms: The Government value the work of the Broadband Stakeholder Group and the significant contribution it has made to the successful development of broadband in the UK. The DTI is reviewing with stakeholders how the work of the BSG might best be taken forward in the future. I will make an announcement when the review has been completed.

Bank of Credit and Commerce International

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Secretary of State last met the liquidators of BCCI. [149584]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Officials met one of the liquidators of BCCI on 4 March 2003 to review the progress of the liquidation.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which liquidators of BCCI the Chief Executive of the Insolvency Service met on 4 March 2003; and for what reason. [151679]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Chief Executive of the Insolvency Service met Mr. John Richards, one of the liquidators of BCCI, on 4 March 2003 to discuss the progress of the liquidation.

Bankruptcies

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* personal and *(b)* company bankruptcies there were in each of the last three years for which there are records; what assessment she has made of recent trends; and if she will make a statement. [150214]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The following table shows total personal and company insolvencies in England and Wales for 2000 to 2002 and the first three quarters of 2003. Figures for 2003 as a whole will be available on 6 February.

The latest quarterly figures (Q3 2003) shows decreases in company insolvencies and increases in individual insolvencies, when compared to both the previous quarter and the corresponding quarter of 2002. The latest annual figures continue increasing trends in levels of insolvency since 1997 for both companies and individuals. However the annual rate of company insolvencies for the last 12 months remains at the Q2 level of 1.0 per cent., the lowest level since Q1 1989 and just over a third of the level reached following the recession in the early 1990s.

Insolvencies in England and Wales: Seasonally adjusted

	Company insolvencies			*Individual insolvencies*		
Years	*Total*	*Compulsory liquidations*	*Creditors' voluntary liquidations*	*Total*	*Bankruptcy orders*	*Individual voluntary arrangements*[1]
2000	14,317	4,925	9,392	29,528	21,550	7,978
2001	14,972	4,675	10,297	29,775	23,477	6,298
2002	16,305	6,230	10,075	30,587	24,292	6,295
2000						
Q1	3,522	1,178	2,344	7,612	5,361	2,251
Q2	3,431	1,242	2,189	7,440	5,326	2,114
Q3	3,775	1,306	2,469	7,200	5,393	1,808
Q4	3,589	1,198	2,391	7,276	5,471	1,805
2001						
Q1	3,825	1,330	2,495	7,473	5,742	1,730
Q2	3,765	1,296	2,468	7,591	5,994	1,597
Q3	3,692	1,005	2,687	7,324	5,753	1,571
Q4	3,690	1,044	2,646	7,387	5,988	1,399

Insolvencies in England and Wales: Seasonally adjusted

	Company insolvencies			Individual insolvencies		
Years	*Total*	*Compulsory liquidations*	*Creditors' voluntary liquidations*	*Total*	*Bankruptcy orders*	*Individual voluntary arrangements*[1]
2002						
Q1	4,014	1,376	2,638	7,244	5,808	1,437
Q2	4,130	1,608	2,522	7,596	6,003	1,593
Q3	3,882	1,475	2,407	7,779	6,180	1,600
Q4	4,280	1,772	2,508	7,967	6,302	1,665
2003						
Q1	3,672	1,540	2,132	8,146	6,562	1,584
Q2	[2]3,825	[2]1,416	[2]2,409	[2]8,738	[2]6,807	[2]1,931
Q3[3]	3,398	1,153	2,245	9,094	7,086	2,008

[1] Including Deeds of Arrangement.
[2] Revised, reflecting an amendment to the raw data/update of seasonally adjusted figures.
[3] Provisional.

Bribery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what departmental investigations her Department has initiated into bribery allegations against a UK company since November 1997. [151511]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department's records concerning Companies Acts investigations are not kept in a manner which facilitates provision of the information requested. However, officials do not believe that any such investigations have been initiated into allegations of bribery since November 1997.

The Department also has a criminal investigation function, established principally to follow up allegations of offences under the Companies and Insolvency Acts. Examination of the records of this section do not reveal any allegations of bribery having been investigated since November 1997.

Such an allegation would, in most instances, be better suited to be dealt with by the wider powers of the police.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many allegations of bribery have been received by the National Contact Point for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises; and how many of these allegations have been forwarded to the National Criminal Intelligence Service. [151512]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The NCP has received one allegation of bribery. The allegation was received verbally while attending a conference. The NCP asked that details be provided in writing; these details were then passed to the National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Buzzard Oil Field Contract

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value of the Buzzard oil field contract is; which companies tendered for the contract; what the country of origin of each company is; and which company won the bid. [151151]

Mr. Timms: EnCana (UK) Ltd., Operator of the North Sea Buzzard oil field, anticipates that development costs on the project will be around £1.35 billion. There is no single contract to develop this field and the operator, solely responsible for project procurement, is still engaged in the process of awarding more than 200 separate contracts to suppliers from the UK, the wider EU and elsewhere.

EnCana advise however that UK-owned and UK-based companies have already won around two thirds of over £500 million worth of major contracts awarded on the project. I am pleased to acknowledge the successes of these companies who have again proved themselves competitive internationally. I am also advised that UK-based companies are likely to win yet more work from the contracts currently being tendered.

The following list gives an indication, in respect of some of the major contracts awarded thus far, of the operational location of those tendering and identifies successful companies. Values of individual tenders, and of contracts placed, are still considered commercially sensitive by the operator EnCana.

Service/Company	*Operational country*	*Award date*
Front End Studies		
Granherne	UK	
Genesis	UK	January 2002
Engineering Design		
John Brown	UK	August 2002
Brown and Root	UK	
AMEC	UK	
Jackets		
Aker Kvaerner	Norway	September 2003
Dragados	Spain	
Heerema	Holland	
SLP	UK—only tendered the smallest jacket	
Wellhead Topsides		
Heerema (Hartlepool)	UK	
SLP	UK	
McNulty Offshore	UK	
Burntisland Fabricators	UK	November 2003
Swan Hunter	UK	
HBG	Holland	
BLADT	Denmark	
Production Deck		
AMEC	UK	
Dragados	Spain	December 2003
Aker Kvaerner	Norway	
Heerema (Hartlepool)	UK	
Utilities and Quarters Deck		
AMEC	UK	
Dragados	Spain	
Aker Kvaerner	Norway	
Heerema (Hartlepool)	UK	December 2003

Civil Partnerships Bill

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effects extending the provisions of the Civil Partnerships Bill to heterosexual couples. [147061]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 13 January 2004]:* Civil partnership is aimed at same-sex couples who cannot obtain full legal recognition of their relationships. Opposite-sex couples can achieve this through marriage. There can be no real benefit of extending to opposite-sex couples the right to achieve legal recognition of their relationships when they already enjoy that opportunity.

Company Liquidation

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies went into liquidation in 2003. [151011]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Annual insolvency figures for 2003 are not yet available. The insolvencies press release for the fourth quarter of 2003 will be published on Friday 6 February at 9:30 am.

The seasonally adjusted figures for the first three quarters of 2003 are shown in the following table:

Company insolvencies in England and Wales in 2003
Seasonally adjusted

Quarter	*Total*	*Compulsory liquidations*	*Creditors voluntary liquidations*
Q1	3,672	1,540	2,132
Q2	3,825	1,416	2,409
Q3[1]	3,398	1,153	2,245

[1] Provisional.

Distance Selling

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she is taking to inform consumers about their rights concerning distance selling. [151258]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Online information is available from my Department's website and from the Consumer Gateway (www2.consumer.gov.uk/consumer_web/e-shopping.htm), which provides links to a variety of websites that will help consumers make informed decisions about buying goods and services.

On 29 December DTI published guidance about buying from internet auction sites, and on 22 January the Department began a consultation on changes to the Distance Selling Regulations, including a proposal to clarify what suppliers must tell consumers about their cancellation rights.

DTFs Safe Internet Shopping campaign, launched in 2001, promotes wider access to information on e-commerce. Guidance has been delivered through TV and radio, and over the internet in partnership with private sector organisations such as Microsoft, Sainsbury's, Freeserve and Expedia. Hard copy information has been distributed through Citizens Advice Bureaux and libraries. The Office of Fair Trading also provides information on internet shopping and distance contracts more generally, on its website and through consumer roadshows.

In addition, Consumer Direct will offer advice to consumers by telephone, by e-mail or on the web. The service is likely to begin in three pathfinder areas this Summer and is expected to be operating nationally by 2007.

Energy Policy

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has had with the Russian Government on securing a supply of gas to the UK. [151707]

Mr. Timms: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry discussed gas issues with Russian Government during the "Russia-UK Energy Conference: Long Term Partners" held in June last year, during President Putin's State visit. During the visit, she had a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Kudrin where a wide range of issues were discussed.

Also at the conference, I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Igor Yusufov, Minister for Energy for the Russian Federation, in which the UK and Russia agreed to work closely together on the North European Gas Pipeline project.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many valid applications have been received for the renewable energy initiative of the Export Credits Guarantee Department; which have been successful; what the *(a)* company involved, *(b)* amount allocated, *(c)* project type and *(d)* form of renewable energy concerned is for each successful application; and what the maximum liability is. [151693]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Since the announcement of the renewables initiative ECGD has received 24 inquiries, nine of which required and were given preliminary indications of cover for business in prospect. So far none of these have progressed to the stage of becoming firm business.

Gas (Northern Ireland)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average bill for domestic gas consumers in Northern Ireland who pay for gas by *(a)* direct debit, *(b)* quarterly credit and *(c)* prepayment meter was in the last year for which figures are available. [151527]

Mr. Timms: The average bill for domestic gas consumers in Northern Ireland at current 2004 prices for the various payment methods is as follows:

Payment method	*Bill (£ per annum)*
Direct Debit	377
Quarterly credit	398
Prepayment meter	402

Note:
[1] Figures are calculated using an annual consumption of 18,000 kWh, and are inclusive of VAT.
[2] Figures relate to prices charged by Phoenix Natural Gas, the sole domestic gas supplier for Northern Ireland.
Source:
Phoenix Natural Gas

Investment

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information she collates on the investment levels of small and medium enterprises of other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development states in Asian countries. [151805]

Nigel Griffiths: This information is not collected by HMG since this would involve tracking each individual company and therefore be a disproportionate cost to obtain the information.

National Business Angels Network

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget was of the National Business Angels Network for each year since its inception; and what the anticipated budget is for each year until 2006–07. [151434]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The National Business Angels Network is a private company, which has received the following funding from the DTI:

	£
2000–01	340,000
2001–02	250,000
2002–03	200,000
2003–04	200,000
2004–05	[1]150,000
2005–06	[1]150,000

[1] Subject to upward-only review up to a maximum of £200,000

National Power Provision

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what powers exist to penalise power companies whose service suffers from persistent power cut problems. [151196]

Mr. Timms: Both my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority have powers to penalise power companies whose service suffers from persistent power interruptions.

The DTI's Engineering Inspectorate has powers under Regulation 34 of The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002, to impose actions on a company to improve its service. The Inspectorate may take action if there is evidence to suggest that repeated interruptions to supply are occurring and that no remedial measures have been taken.

The Gas and Electricity Markets Authority has powers under the Electricity Act 1989 to investigate whether a licence holder has breached the conditions of its licence, and if so, whether remedial action (such as a financial penalty) is appropriate. The Authority may impose a penalty upon a licence holder when it is satisfied that a licence holder is contravening or has contravened any relevant condition or requirement. No penalty imposed may exceed 10 per cent. of the turnover of the licence holder.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many power cuts there were in each of the last five years in *(a)* Howden, *(b)* Anlaby, *(c)* Willerby, *(d)* North Cave, *(e)* South Cave, *(f)* Kirk Ella, *(g)* Cottingham, *(h)* Eastrington, *(i)* Brough, *(j)* North Ferriby, *(k)* Swanland and *(l)* Holme Upon Spalding Moor. [151256]

Mr. Timms: It has not been possible for Yorkshire Electricity Distribution Limited (YEDL) to collate all the information sought within a short timescale.

I will respond to the right hon. Member in writing when I have received a full report from YEDL.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the power consumption of the United Kingdom was in each of the last 25 years. [151261]

Mr. Timms: Available data are shown in the following table.

TWh

	Total electricity consumption
1978	231.42
1979	242.00
1980	231.11
1981	227.21
1982	222.82
1983	226.09
1984	230.96
1985	241.85
1986[1]	249.34
1986[1]	259.82
1987	268.38
1988	274.50
1989	279.40
1990	284.42
1991	290.84
1992	291.45
1993	295.75
1994	292.83
1995	303.92
1996	319.78
1997	321.07
1998	325.35
1999	332.05
2000	340.30
2001	342.78
2002	343.83

[1] Prior to 1986 the consumption figures are based on electricity supplied from major power producers, transport undertakings and industrial hydro and nuclear stations only. From 1986 the consumption figures are based on electricity supplied from all generating companies.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much compensation for loss of power was paid by power companies to customers in each of the last five years, broken down by individual power company. [151262]

Mr. Timms: Payments made under Guaranteed Standards of Performance following loss of power were as follows.

	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2002–03 storms compensation
Aquila	0	0	400	0	0	542,650
EME	150	30	100	0	350	44,820
EPN	390	85	1,[illegible]0	0	0	1,155,800
Hydro	0	120	0	0	0	
LPN	150	66,920	650	100	0	
NEDL	385,650	0	16,050	750	250	
SP	0	0	6,425	3,150	7,900	
SPN	0	12,660	100	0	0	3,725
Southern	0	60	100	0	0	2,000
SP Manweb	0	0	8,150	4,300	12,625	157,575
UU	628,520	240	6,250	2,800	400	
WPD S. Wales	0	30	400	0	0	[1]1,300
WPD S. West	0	0	0	0	0	
YEDL	180	0	4,075	2,450	0	

[1] WPD S. Wales payment relates to total paid by WPD S Wales and WPD S. West. From April 2000 payment in respect of first payment due increased from £30 to £50 and period triggering payment reduced from 24 to 18 hours.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure that power companies give adequate compensation to customers who suffer from power cuts. [151263]

Mr. Timms: This is a matter for the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem). As part of its distribution price control review, which is presently under way, Ofgem is reviewing the standards of performance under which compensation payments are made.

As the next price control is not implemented until April 2005, with two winter periods before then, Ofgem has recently introduced interim arrangements for compensation in severe weather conditions. The aim of these arrangements is to ensure that the basis for compensation is clear and that customers who have valid claims are paid out quickly after the event. Under the new arrangements, for all but the most extreme events, customers who make a valid claim for compensation will be entitled to £25 if they are off supply for more than 48 hours plus £25 for each additional 12 hour period up to a maximum payment of £200.

Under normal weather conditions, the Guaranteed Standards of Performance continue to apply and a payment of £50 is triggered at 18 hours with £25 for each additional 12 hour period.

Nigeria

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 25 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 798W, on the Export Credits Guarantee Department, if she will list the contracts for which Nigeria has incurred its total debt to the ECGD, stating the project type and the UK company concerned in each instance. [151539]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The current outstanding debt on Nigeria is £4.494 billion (this figure includes interest and arrears.) Due to the high number of transactions involved (over 26,000 dating back 20 years or more), it would not be possible to identify all projects individually without incurring disproportionate cost.

Nuclear Energy

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the confidentiality clauses at pages 88 to 90, paragraph 38 of the Nuclear Liabilities Fund Agreement covering British Energy Generation Ltd. and Newcol dated 1 October 2003 will preclude providing hon. Members with details of British Energy contracts with British Nuclear Fuels plc. [147620]

Mr. Timms: Clause 38(4) of the Nuclear Liabilities Funding Agreement provides that the Secretary of State may disclose information to Parliament to the extent that she considers that it is appropriate to do so pursuant to her duty to Parliament but, where reasonably practicable, shall consult with Newcol (the proposed successor company to British Energy under the restructuring) prior to such disclosure. Any request to the Secretary of State for disclosure of the contracts would be considered in the light of information already made available by British Energy, and Exemption 13: Third Party's Commercial Confidences of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Defence Facilities

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 505–06W, whether any visits by safeguards inspectors have been made to military nuclear facilities; and what the *(a)* dates and *(b)* purposes were of the visits. [151867]

Mr. Timms: As indicated in the previous answer, there are and have been no safeguards inspections at UK defence nuclear facilities. Senior officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency (the IAEA) did take up an invitation from the UK to visit such a facility in 1993 to discuss UK support for the use of sampling and measurement techniques which had the potential to help strengthen the IAEA safeguards regime as a whole.

Political Risk Insurance

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the length of time is within which the Export Credits Guarantee Department must appraise whether a claim will be paid on political risk insurance. [151493]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Under the terms of ECGD's insurance products, in order for ECGD to assess whether a claim will or will not be paid, evidence must be provided by the Insured to demonstrate to ECGD's

satisfaction that an insured loss has occurred. There is no fixed time limit on this process although the Insured must notify its intention to make a claim within a set period, which is three months for Overseas Investment Insurance Policy and 12 months for Export Insurance Policy and Bond Insurance Policy.

Under its financing products, ECGD will normally pay claims including interest to the financing banks following notification of default. Claims are normally paid three months after the due date of payment of the defaulted amount.

Postal Services

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to implement postal competition in line with EU requirements set out in COM (2004) 29. [151492]

Mr. Timms: The UK has set an end date for the full opening of the UK postal market by 31 March 2007. Market opening is proceeding in three phases to allow Royal Mail to prepare for competition and for potential entrants to prepare to enter the market.

The first phase, which started in January 2003, provides three possible entry routes for new entrants designed to open up 30 per cent. of the UK letter market (by revenue). In phase two, from 1 April 2005, Postcomm intends to open another 30 per cent. of the mails market (by revenue) by increasing the proportion of the bulk mail market that is open to competition. We believe that this staged approach provides Royal Mail, other operators and customers with a clear end date and a simple step-by-step transition to make their plans.

Market developments are consistent with trends in Europe, and concordant with the requirements of the EU Postal Services Directives.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will break down how *(a)* the funding allocated to modernisation of the Post Office network, *(b)* her Department's financial support to Consignia, and *(c)* the grant-in-aid to the Consumer Council for postal services set out in her Departmental Report 2003 was allocated for 2003–04. [147803]

Mr. Timms: The funding provision for 2003–04 for postal services as published in my Department's Departmental Report 2003 is:

(a) £90 million allocated to modernisation of the Post Office network in support for the urban post office network reinvention programme to fund the compensation payment terms negotiated between Post Office Ltd. (POL) and the National Federation of SubPostmasters and the investment grant package;

(b) The DTI has provided a loan facility to POL (a wholly owned subsidiary of Royal Mail Group plc) to enable it to fund its working capital requirements. This is primarily to ensure that there is sufficient cash in post offices to meet benefit payment and other cash needs. POL's cash used to be pre-funded by the Department for Work and Pensions but the pre-funding will decline as benefits are paid directly into recipients' accounts and POL still needs to have the cash available for benefits to be paid in cash. The loan facility package is designed on commercial lines in terms of interest and commitment charges and administration fees;

(c) The provision of £7.810 million is based on the Consumer Council for Postal Services (CCPS) actual budget expenditure for 2001–02. The actual budget agreed for 2003–04 is £9.905 million. The breakdown of how the funding was allocated for 2003–04 will be published in the CCPS financial report on 30 July 2004.

Power Stations (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the power stations in Wales and their *(a)* maximum operating capacity and *(b)* average operating capacity over the last year. [151756]

Mr. Timms: Power stations in Wales owned by major power producers along with their installed capacities as at the end of May 2003 are listed as follows:

Station	*Fuel*	*Installed capacity (MW)*
Aberthaw B	Coal-fired	1,455
Aberthaw GT	Gas oil	51
Barry	Gas-CCGT	250
Connahs Quay	Gas-CCGT	1,380
Cwm Dyli	Hydro	10
Deeside	Gas-CCGT	[1]250
Dinorwig	Pumped storage	1,728
Dolgarrog	Hydro	37
Ffestiniog	Pumped Storage	360
Fifoots Point	Coal	[2]393
Maentwrog	Hydro	20
Rheidol	Hydro	50
Wylfa	Nuclear	980

[1] Excludes a further 250 MW that was mothballed, but brought back into service at the end of 2003.
[2] In receivership and not operating at that time but subsequently leased by Innogy for winter 2003–04 operations.
Source:
Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2003, Table 5.10

Operational data for individual power stations are matters for the operating companies themselves and are not collected centrally. In total, generation by the stations listed above in 2002 was 30,459 GWh. It is estimated that the aggregate plant load factor for these stations 4 per cent. for the UK as a whole.

Project Funding

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding has been provided by her Department to finance *(a)* the UK High Technology Fund, *(b)* the Quality Mark Scheme, *(c)* the Inside UK Enterprise Scheme, *(d)* the Construction Line Programme, *(e)* the Basic Technologies Programme, *(f)* the Construction Best Practice Programme and *(g)* the Foresight Programme in each financial year since the inception of each; what funding has been allocated to finance each scheme in future financial years; and if she will estimate the extent to which businesses have benefited from each initiative to date. [149448]

Ms Hewitt: The following table shows the level of funding provided to 2002–03; and, the projected spend in future years.

Expenditure (£ million)

	UK High Technology Fund	*Quality Mark*	*Inside UK Enterprise*	*Construction Line*	*Basic Technologies*	*Construction Best Practice*[2]	*Foresight*
1998–99	—	—	n/a	—	—	n/a	1.4
1999–2000	3.0	—	n/a	—	—	n/a	2.8
2000–01	17.0		n/a	—	—	n/a	4.8
2001–02	0	[1,2] 6.7	n/a	0.2	—	2.1	2.2
2002–03	0		1.2	0.2	—	2.7	1.0
2003–04	0	2.0	1.2	0	0.6	2.6	1.8
2004–05	0	0	0	0	2.8	0	0
2005–06	0	0	0	0	2.4	0	0
2006–07	0	0	0	0	2.0	0	0
2007–08	0	0	0	0	0.3	0	0

[1] Combined expenditure 2000–03
[2] Funded by former DETR 1998—June 2001
Notes:
1. Some historic expenditure data has been omitted from this reply due to the disproportionate cost of providing it.
2. Forecast expenditure reflects outstanding legal and contractual obligations.
3. All figures have been rounded to the nearest £100,000

Benefits to Business

(a) UK High Technology Fund

The UK High Technology fund has stimulated private sector investments of £106.1 million, against a target of £105 million, significantly increasing the amount of finance available for investment in technology-based businesses.

From the total fund of £126.1million (which includes DTI investment of £20 million), over £123 million of this has, to date, been committed to nine specialist venture capital funds. These venture capital funds have in turn made investments in over 130 technology-based companies throughout the UK.

(b) Quality Mark

Quality Mark provides a competitive edge for accredited tradespeople by improving the information available to consumers.

(c) Inside UK Enterprise

In the three years to 2002, Inside UK Enterprise helped users to increase sales by around £175 million and increase profit margins by around £135 million.

(d) Constructionline

Constructionline streamlines procurement procedures and cuts costs by supplying the construction industry and its clients with a single national pre-qualification scheme.

(e) Basic Technologies

The first projects to be supported by this programme commenced in mid-2003. It is too early to estimate the benefits to businesses.

(f) Construction Best Practice

In 2002, businesses using Construction Best Practice increased profitability by £56 million—28 times the cost of running the scheme.

Productivity also improved with each user saving an average of 12 days and £3,300. This equates to a total of £8.5 million and 60,000 days saved.

It is currently estimated that in 2003, users increased their profitability by more than £100 million.

(g) Foresight

Between 1994 and 2001 the Foresight Programme helped Government, Research Organisations and Business prepare for the future by helping to identify potential threats and opportunities over the coming 10 to 20 years. New partnerships have been forged between business and the science base and across all sectors and disciplines to change the way business and the science base relate to each other and to the future.

Organisations such as Research Councils, Training Organisations, other Government Departments and education funding bodies used the results of Foresight to set priorities for the benefit of business.

Public Bodies (Membership)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the members of the *(a)* Post Office Users Council for Scotland, *(b)* Post Office Users Council for Northern Ireland, *(c)* Post Office Users Council for Wales, *(d)* English Advisory Committee on Telecommunications and *(e)* Scottish Advisory Committee on Telecommunications were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151448]

Mr. Timms: In 2001 the former Post Office Users National Council was replaced by a new Consumer Council of Postal Services, known as Postwatch. The Postwatch Council is made up of the Chairs of nine Regional Postwatch Committees and four national Council members, operating under a National Chairman. Full details of all Council members and their remuneration are set out in the Postwatch Annual Report. Currently the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh committees are chaired by, respectively John Stringer, Tom Begg and Eifon Pritchard. The remuneration for the Regional Chairs is based on an average annual rate of £20,500 per annum for two days per week; with some working for two and a half and some three days per week.

The Advisory Committees on Telecommunications effectively ceased to exist with the vesting of Ofcom on 29 December 2003.

Science and Society Directorate

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 646W, on the Science and Society Directorate, whether the objectives of the Science

and Society Directorate's Public Engagement Team include the promotion of the public understanding of cultural factors impinging on and operating within scientific communities that will help the public make informed judgments. [151087]

Ms Hewitt: The Science and Society Directorate's Public Engagement Team promotes public awareness and engagement with all aspects of science. This includes the scientific 'process' in all its forms, for example: the setting of research priorities; peer review; the interaction of scientists within and across disciplines; the legal boundaries within which scientists operate; ethical considerations; and the lack of absolute certainty in science.

We believe this approach helps to set the context within which the public can consider specific science related issues as they arise.

Security Passes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in her Department in the last 12 months. [150889]

Ms Hewitt: I refer to the answer given to the right hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten) on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1386W.

Telecommunications Masts

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what studies have been commissioned by her Department into the safety of TETRA masts. [151793]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* My Department contributes to the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme (MTHR), which includes studies looking at TETRA technology. The Home Office also has an extensive research programme. Details of the MTHR research programme can be found at www.mthr.org.uk and the Home Office at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/tetra.html

UK Business Online

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the closure of UK Business Online. [150617]

Mr. Timms: In November 2002, the Secretary of State announced that business support was to be radically restructured as a result of feedback from key stakeholders. Rather than being closed, therefore, UK online for business will be integrated into mainstream DTI and Business Link, from April onwards. The aim is to make it simpler for businesses to access the support that DTI provides and to make the support more effective.

While the UK online for business brand will therefore be discontinued, ICT support and promotion will nevertheless remain a key focus for DTI.

Unfair Dismissal

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice her Department has given to small firms about unfair dismissal rules introduced under the Employment Act 2002. [144235]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Part 3 of the Employment Act 2002 set out a framework of new minimum statutory dismissal and disciplinary and grievance procedures, and also made some changes to the law on unfair dismissal and on employment particulars. The detailed operation of disciplinary and grievance procedures was left to be specified via secondary legislation. This was laid before Parliament on 20 January 2004, and is anticipated to come into force on 1 October 2004.

All employers, regardless of size, will normally be required to follow these minimum procedures before dismissing employees—failure to do so may result in a tribunal finding the dismissal automatically unfair. In addition, in ordinary unfair dismissal cases, the employment tribunals will continue to take account of the Acas Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures in deciding whether or not an employer acted reasonably in dismissing. Acas launched this month a public consultation on a revised version of their Code of Practice.

The Government will put in hand an extensive guidance and advice campaign in good time for implementation, in consultation with small firms and other advisory organisations. This will inform employers and employees as necessary of the new rights and responsibilities created by this part of the Employment Act.

Utilities Act

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under which provisions of the Utilities Act 2000 she is prevented from making public the findings of the Engineering Inspectorate of its inquiry into the power failures in London and Birmingham; and if she will make a statement. [151346]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Section 105 of the Utilities Act 2000 places general restrictions on the disclosure of information relating to the affairs of any individual or to any particular business obtained by virtue of the provisions of the Act, Part I of the Gas Act 1986 or Part I of the Electricity Act 1989 during the lifetime of the individual or so long as the business continues.

Disclosure is permissible with the consent of the individual or the person for the time being carrying on the business. Disclosure is also permitted in limited circumstances, for example where it is necessary for the purpose of facilitating the performance of certain functions of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry or regulatory authorities or where it is required by a licence holder in order to fulfil a condition of his licence.

Section 105 makes unauthorised disclosure of information obtained under the 2000 Act, or under Part I of the 1986 Act or Part I of the 1989 Act, a criminal offence.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Attendance Allowance Claims

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of attendance allowance claims, processed since the new claim pack was introduced in October 2003, have been subject to appeal. [146742]

Mr. Pond *[pursuant to his reply, 7 January 2004, c. 458W]*: The information given contained an inaccuracy in one of the figures; that of the number of decisions made in November 2003. The correct information is tabled as follows.

The following information shows the number of decisions made on new Attendance Allowance claims in the months of October and November 2003 and the number of Attendance Allowance appeals registered in the same months. Decisions appealed in October and November will contain a mix of claims made on the old and new forms. No separate data are available.

	October 2003	*November 2003*
Decisions made	35,111	30,521
Appeals registered	1,213	1,120
Percentage	3.45	3.67

Child Poverty

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of children are living in poverty, using the *(a)* absolute low income, *(b)* relative low income and *(c)* material deprivation indicators announced in his Department's report, Measuring Child Poverty; and if he will give this information for (i) before and (ii) after housing costs for (A) 1998 and (B) 2001 for (1) the UK, (2) England, broken down by region, (3) Scotland, (4) Wales and (5) Northern Ireland. [151376]

Mr. Pond: The requested figures for absolute and relative low income are available from: "Households Below Average Income—An analysis of the income distribution for 1994–95 to 2001–02". This analysis covers Great Britain only; no data are available for Northern Ireland.

'Measuring Child Poverty', published in December 2003, outlines the Government's measure of UK child poverty for the long term; this new measure will begin from 2004–05. It also states that data for material deprivation will not be collected on the Family Resources Survey until the 2004–05 sample, and not available for full analysis until 2006.

All publications listed are available in the Library.

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate *(a)* how many and *(b)* what percentage of children will be living in poverty in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2010 and (iii) 2020, (A) before and (B) after housing costs, broken down by nation and region of the UK. [151377]

Mr. Pond: Pre-Budget report 2003 announced that the child element of the Child Tax Credit would increase by £180 to £1,625 a year, equivalent to a weekly increase of £3.50. This increase will benefit 7.2 million children in 3.7 million families. As a result of this investment the Government are on track to meet or exceed its PSA target to reduce by a quarter the number of children in low income-households by 2004–05 on a Before Housing Costs (BHC) basis. The target is more challenging on an After Housing Costs (AHC) basis, although the nature of the target means there are uncertainties either way.

Forecasting how many children will be in relative low income in future years is problematic. Any estimate is dependent on forecasting median household income growth from 2001–02 (the latest available data). This itself is dependent on a number of factors, including the rate of earnings growth, demographic changes, changes in household composition and employment patterns, and changes to the tax and benefit system. Consequently, there is inherent uncertainty in any estimates produced, which is exacerbated the further into the future one attempts to model. For this reason, while our estimates allow us to provide a broad indication of progress towards the 2004–05 PSA target to inform policy decisions, point estimates are not sufficiently robust to be put in the public domain.

Independent analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies suggests that the increase in Child Tax Credit will enable the Government to make substantial progress on both elements of the PSA. This extra investment will also enable the Government to make progress step by step towards their goal to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020.

Departmental Office (Hebburn)

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are employed in the Department's offices in Hebburn; and how many of those are residents of south Tyneside. [146949]

Maria Eagle: The Department has 51 staff working in Hebburn of these eight have postcodes indicating a south Tyneside home address.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the age profile is of the people employed in the Department's offices in Hebburn. [146950]

Maria Eagle: The age profile of the staff working in the Department's offices in Hebburn is shown in the table.

Age group	*Number of staff in age group*
Under 20	0
21–30	6
31–40	14
41–50	22
51+	9
Total	51

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the annual running costs are of the Department's offices in Hebburn; and when the offices are due for closure. [146996]

Maria Eagle: Inland Revenue is the major occupier of the Reyrolle Building in Hebburn. The amount to be paid by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) towards annual running costs for the building is estimated to be £395,701 for the year from April 2003 to March 2004.

The lease is due to expire in June 2006. It is anticipated that DWP staff will be relocated before then.

Industrial Injury Disablement Benefit

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the procedures are for claiming industrial injury disablement benefit; and if he will list the claim forms required. [147944]

Mr. Browne: A person wishing to claim Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) in respect of an industrial accident or a prescribed disease should, in respect of an industrial accident, fill in BI 100A and, in respect of prescribed diseases, BI 100B for all diseases apart from Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema (BI 100C); Allergic Rhinitis (BI 100E); Occupational Asthma (BI 1000A); Occupational Deafness (BI 1000D); and Pneumoconiosis, Byssinosis or asbestos related diseases (BI 100PN).

An appropriate advice leaflet from the series SD6/7/8 will also be sent; a person wishing to claim IIDB should complete the appropriate form and forward it without delay to their local Social Security office.

Copies of all forms referred to are in the Library.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151043]

Maria Eagle: Centres of Excellence were established in the Department for Work and Pensions in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition based programmes and projects. As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect it is too early to measure cost savings. All Centres of Excellence are currently developing future plans and as part of this process measurement of savings will be defined.

Publicity Campaigns

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by his Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since 1995–96; what his estimate is for 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [149722]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001. Between that date and March 2003, the Department spent a total of £35,031,354 alerting people to their rights, responsibilities and entitlements through information campaigns. Of this sum, £18,788,328 was spent on advertising using television, radio, cinema and press media. Expenditure by the Department, broken down by year is in the table.

The Department's agencies and non-departmental bodies use advertising for various reasons, ranging from public information and recruitment to advertising opening hours of local offices. On each occasion, national and/or regional media may be used as well as various local newspapers. A breakdown of expenditure by agency and non-departmental public body could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

£

	Total publicity costs	*Advertising costs*
June 2001 to March 2002	22,727,979	13,787,594
April 2002 to March 2003	12,303,375	5,000,734
Total	35,031,354	18,788,328

Notes:

1. Machinery of Government changes during the period 1997 to 2001 mean that like-for-like figures are not obtainable without disproportionate cost. During this time communications activity was accounted for under different systems in the agencies, Headquarters and the Department for Education and Employment, part of which transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions.
2. All costs exclude VAT.
3. Advertising costs are total publicity costs excluding all production costs.
4. Information campaigns costing under £250,000 have not been included as a disproportionate cost would be incurred in compiling these figures.

Unclaimed Assets Register

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much money there is in the Unclaimed Assets Register. [148380]

Maria Eagle: As Government Accounting does not explicitly require the Department to maintain a register of unclaimed assets and neither is it in the nature of DWP's business to come into contact with such items, the Department does not keep an unclaimed assets register.

US Warships (Disposal)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department has received from Able UK Ltd. reports on the condition of the visible asbestos on board the ships from the US Naval Reserve docked at Hartlepool; and if he will make a statement. [148615]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* DWP has not received any reports. However, in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Health and Safety Executive, Able UK arranged for an inspection to be undertaken of the visible asbestos aboard the four US Naval Reserve ships prior to the ship leaving the US. In accordance with said conditions Able UK advised HSE on 6 October for the first two ships and 17 October for the second two that the visual condition of the asbestos aboard was good. The ships docked in Hartlepool on 12, 13, 27 November and 3 December, soon after they arrived Able UK confirmed to HSE that the asbestos remained in a satisfactory condition. On 10 December

inspectors from HSE made a tour of one of the ships and confirmed Able UK's report that the visual condition of the asbestos in accessible locations was good.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Criminal Justice Boards

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department further to his answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 497W, on the Nottinghamshire Criminal Justice Board, whether the action plans of local criminal justice boards are being sent to local hon. Members for comment. [145048]

Paul Goggins: It is a matter for Local Criminal Justice Boards how they consult locally on their plans.

Nottinghamshire Criminal Justice Board has not sent its plan to local hon. Members for comment. However, I understand that in the spring the Board plans to hold a consultation event on the criminal justice system for local hon. Members.

Knives

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had regarding a UK-wide amnesty on knives. [150953]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* There are presently no plans to introduce a national knives amnesty. However, we are discussing a range of issues relating to the sale and possession of knives with the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the merits of raising the age limit for the purchase of non-kitchen knives to 18 years of age. [150955]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* We are currently seeking the views of the Association of Chief Police Officers on the sale of knives.

Prison/Probation Services

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people, broken down by grade, were employed *(a)* at the National Probation Directorate and *(b)* at the headquarters of the Prison Service on the latest date available; and how many of these are (i) consultants and (ii) contractual staff. [147633]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is listed.

Table A indicates the total establishment in the National Probation Directorate, broken down by grade and the relevant numbers of consultants and contractual staff from that establishment figure.

Table B indicates the total establishment in the Prison Service Headquarters, broken down by grade and relevant consultant/contractual establishment from that total.

These figures are the latest available as at 31 December 2003 and 31 October 2003 respectively.

Projects are currently under way to substantially reduce staff within the National Probation Directorate.

Note:
The figures shown in the Contractual/Consultant columns are included in the total figure. Agency staff only included in the total column.

Table A: Total National Probation Directorate staff by grade, as at 31 December 2003

Grade	*Staff in post 31 December 2003*	*Consultants within establishment*	*Contractual staff within establishment*
SCS	14	0	0
Grade 6	37	1	2
Grade 7	96	10	10
Senior Executive Officer	56	5	8
Higher Executive Officer (D)	1	0	0
Higher Executive Officer	49	4	1
Executive Officer	65	1	0
Administrative Officer	37	0	0
Administrative Assistant	7	0	0
Senior Personal Secretary	9	0	0
Personal Secretary	15	0	0
Assistant Chief Officer	12	0	0
Senior Probation Officer	11	0	0
Detective Chief Inspector	1	0	0
PO5	1	0	0
Psychological Assistant	2	0	0
Interventions Consultants	17	17	0
Electronic Monitoring Consultants	4	4	0
IT Project Manager	1	—	1
IT Consultants	9	9	—
Total	444	51	22

Table B: Total Prison Service headquarters staff by grade, as at 31 October 2003

Grade	Staff in post 31 October 2003	Consultants/ contractual staff 30 September 2003
AA	59	16
AO	368	45
Assistant Information Officer	1	0
EO	418	16
Farm and Gardens Grades	1	0
Governor 5	1	0
HEO(D)	2	0
Industrial	63	4
Manager E	304	9
Manager F	314	12
Manager G	161	4
Nursing Grades	2	0
OSG	11	0
Personal Secretary	79	6
Principal Officer	87	1
Principal Officer IDS	3	0
Prison Officer	52	0
Prof and Tech Officer	10	0
Psychological Assistant	26	1
Psychologist	15	0
Scientific Officer	1	0
Senior Civil Servant	42	1
Senior Manager A	17	0
Senior Manager B	55	0
Senior Manager C	27	0
Senior Manager D	236	3
Senior Officer	68	0
Senior Officer IDS	1	0
Senior Personal Secretary	12	1
Storeperson/Officer	6	0
Support Band 1	1	0
Support Band 2	12	0
Technical Officer	1	0
Typist	16	3
Total	2,472	122

Prisons (Foreign Nationals)

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals due for detention in *(a)* Yarls Wood and *(b)* other specialist immigration detention centres have been imprisoned in the prison estate in the past (i) 12 months and (ii) 24 months. [151079]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Information on individuals detained in Prison Service establishments who were due to be detained in Immigration Removal Centres and on the number of individuals detained over a period is not available except by examination of individual case files at disproportionate cost.

The latest available data on the number of persons detained solely under Immigration Act 2002 powers relate to 27 September 2003. As at that date, 190 people were recorded as being detained in Prison Service establishments.

The figure of 190 may include individuals who are held pending deportation after completion of custodial sentences. Although the routine use of Prison Service accommodation for immigration detainees ended at the beginning of 2002, it may be necessary to continue to hold some individuals in Prison Service accommodation for reasons of security and control. Such decisions are taken on a case-by-case basis.

Information on Immigration Act 2002 detainees as at 27 December 2003 is due to be published at the end of February on the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* shortest and *(b)* longest period is that an individual due for detention in a specialist immigration detention centre has spent in detention in the prison estate; and what procedures are being implemented to ensure that immigrants who have not been convicted or accused of a crime or offence are not detained in the prison estate. [151080]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* I regret it is not clear exactly what figures the hon. Member is requesting and therefore I cannot say if they are available or not.

The routine use of prisons to hold immigration detainees ended at the beginning of 2002. However, in ending the routine use of prisons to hold detainees, it was made clear that there would continue to be a need to hold small numbers of individual detainees in prison for reasons of security and control. That remains the case.

Remand Fostering Schemes

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how much his Department has spent on remand fostering schemes in each year since 1998; [145171]

(2) how many remand fostering schemes there are. [145175]

Paul Goggins: Remand fostering in England and Wales is funded by local social services departments and neither the Home Office nor the Youth Justice Board hold central information on them. However, some foster placements contribute to bail support and supervision schemes for young people which are sponsored by the Youth Justice Board.

The National Children's Homes (NCH) Wessex Community Remand Project is the largest example. This successful project provides remand fostering for the Wessex Youth Offending Team covering Hampshire, Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight and Southampton. Carers work with a variety of young defendants, most charged with more than two offences including violent and sexual offences and arson. The Home Office sees such schemes as important to the development of intensive community supervision for juveniles.

UK Entry Numbers

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people entered the UK from Sweden in the latest year for which figures are available; [151524]

(2) how many people entered the UK from Bolivia in the latest year for which figures are available; [151525]

(3) how many people entered the UK from Jamaica in the latest year for which figures are available. [151526]

Beverley Hughes: The latest available information shows that a total of 62,300 Jamaican nationals were admitted to the United Kingdom during 2002.

I regret that is not possible to identify nationals of Bolivia separately in our admission statistics.

Also, admission statistics are not collated on Swedish nationals. European Economic Area (EEA) nationals are free to enter the United Kingdom without requiring leave to do so. EEA nationals are therefore not included in statistics on border control.

Data on passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom are published in the Command Paper 'Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2002' (Cm6053), obtainable from the House Library, The Stationery Office and via the Home Office website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hobpubs1.html

Work Permits

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what conditions relate to the issuing of work permits to nationals of countries in the Indian sub-continent. [151982]

Beverley Hughes: There are no specific conditions applied through the work permit arrangements in respect of India or any other individual country. Work permits are issued to foreign nationals to come to work in the UK where an application by a UK employer has met the published criteria.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Cambridgeshire County Council

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the Government grant for Cambridgeshire County Council *(a)* was in 2003–04 and *(b)* will be in 2004–05. [151586];

(2) whether the actual grant payable to Cambridgeshire County Council for 2004–05 has increased in comparison with the current budgetary year. [151583]

Mr. Raynsford: The table as follows shows the amount of grant received by Cambridgeshire County Council in 2003–04 together with the amount that will be paid in 2004–05.

£ million

	2003–04	*2004–05*
Revenue Support Grant	139.766	161.288
Redistributed Business Rates	148.375	140.759
Formula Grant	288.141	302.047

It is inappropriate to directly compare the amount of grant received by Cambridgeshire County Council in 2003–04 with that received in 2004–05 as there have been a number of changes in the functions of councils and the financing of particular services. This includes the change in the financing of combined fire authorities in England, which will become major precepting authorities on 1 April 2004. The table as follows shows the changes to grant on a like-for-like basis.

	Adjucted 2003–04 (£ million)	*2004–05 (£ million)*	*Change (£ million)*	*Percentage change*
Revenue Support Grant	137.040	161.288	24.249	17.7
Redistributed Business Rates	142.756	140.759	-1.997	-1.4
Formula Grant	279.796	302.047	22.252	8.0

Electoral Pilots

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of *(a)* consultation, *(b)* reports and *(c)* publications was in relation to the Electoral Commission's recommendations for electoral pilots of whole regions for the municipal and European elections in 2004. [151572]

Mr. Raynsford: This a matter for the independent Electoral Commission which reports directly to Parliament through the Speaker's Committee.

European Regional Funding

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the criteria were for obtaining European Regional Funding for the 2000 to 2006 period; and what the criteria are for the 2007 to 2013 period. [151891]

Mr. Raynsford: The criteria for obtaining European Regional Funding for 2000–06 were:

Objective 1—Areas corresponding with the EC's NUTS II level, with per capita GDP less than 75 per cent. of the EU average

Objective 2—Regions with structural problems requiring socio-economic conversion, including, in particular, the industrial and service sectors, declining rural areas, urban areas in difficulty and depressed areas dependent on fisheries.

Negotiations on the criteria for 2007–13 have not yet commenced with the European Commission.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the criteria are for organisations to obtain European Regional Funding. [151892]

Mr. Raynsford: To obtain European Regional Funding, organisations must submit good quality projects, which meet the objectives and priorities, plus the project eligibility and selection criteria set out in the relevant Single Programming Document and Programme Complement for that particular area.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the criteria for obtaining *(a)* 2000 to 2006 and *(b)* 2007 to 2013 period European Regional Funding are based on (i) regional and (ii) national data. [151893]

Mr. Raynsford: The eligible areas for European Regional Funding for 2000–06 were based on both regional and national data.

It is too early to speculate on the likely criteria for selecting areas for 2007–13.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether European Regional Funding has to comply with EU state aid rules. [151894]

Mr. Raynsford: Yes. European Regional Funding has to comply with the EU state aid rules.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether European Regional Funding figures are quoted for *(a)* a seven-year period and *(b)* annually. [151895]

Mr. Raynsford: Yes. For the current 2000–06 round of programmes, European Regional Funding allocations are set out in the Single Programming Documents both annually and for the seven-year period. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also holds both seven-year and annual figures at the overall English level.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the proposed regional assemblies would be responsible to *(a)* Parliament and *(b)* the EU for European Regional Funding. [151896]

Mr. Raynsford: The arrangements for the future management of European Regional Funding programmes have not yet been finalised. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would expect the proposed Regional Assemblies to play a leading role, but that precise role has yet to be defined.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Objective One money has been allocated to the *(a)* Yorkshire and Humber Region, *(b)* North West Region and *(c)* North East Region in the current financial year, broken down by area. [151881]

Mr. Raynsford: The Objective 1 programmes operate to a calendar year and the allocations for 2003 and 2004 are as follows:

€ *million*

	2003	*2004*
South Yorkshire	170	150
Merseyside	193	171

The North East region does not qualify for Objective 1 funding.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what projections he has made of the level of Objective One money likely to be given to the *(a)* Yorkshire and Humber Region, *(b)* North West Region and *(c)* North East Region for the 2007–13 period. [151882]

Mr. Raynsford: None, at this stage. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is still awaiting proposals from the European Commission on their priorities for the future allocation of the Structural Funds.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the criteria which need to be fulfilled for an area to obtain Objective 1 funding. [151883]

Mr. Raynsford: For an area to qualify for Objective 1, it must correspond to level II of the Nomenclature of Territorial Statistical Units (NUTS level II) and have a per capita GDP less than 75 per cent. of the EU average.

Fire and Rescue Service

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what estimate he has made of the change in the number of jobs in Staffordshire Fire Service as a result of the proposed regionalisation of the Fire and Rescue Service; [149842]

(2) what change in the number of managerial jobs he expects to result from the regionalisation of the Fire and Rescue Service in Staffordshire. [149847]

(3) whom he has consulted on the plans to regionalise Staffordshire's Fire and Rescue Service; [149843]

(4) what discussions he has had with Staffordshire County Council on his plans to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service; [149845]

(5) what discussions he has had with *(a)* retained and *(b)* full-time firefighters in Staffordshire on his plans to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service; and what their advice was. [149846]

(6) under what powers he would implement the regionalisation of the Fire and Rescue Service in Staffordshire without the consent of Staffordshire county council. [149844]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Members for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow), for Taunton (Mr. Flook), for North Thanet (Mr. Gale), for North Wiltshire (Mr. Gray), for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr. Hammond), for South-East Cambridgeshire (Mr. Paice), for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. Pickles), for Poole (Mr. Syms) and for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire) on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1454–1457W.

Grant Definition

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what definition he uses of *(a)* raw grant and *(b)* adjusted grant in spreadsheets published by his Department on http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0405/fandc2/index.htm. [151585]

Mr. Raynsford: 2004–05 raw grant is the sum of the following items:

The authority's share of the Distributable/Amount (Redistributed National Non-domestic Rates) calculated in accordance with section 6 of the draft Local Government Finance Report (England) 2004/05, *plus*

The amount of any police grant payable to the authority calculated in accordance with section 5 of the draft Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2004–05, *plus*

Revenue Support Grant (RSG) before floors and ceilings for 2004–05.

RSG before floors and ceilings for each authority may be calculated as follows:

Total FSS in 2004–05 calculated in accordance with section 4 of the draft

Local Government Finance Report 2004–05, *minus*

redistributed business *minus*

the result of:

Taxbase as described Annex D of the draft Local Government Finance Report 2004/05, *multiplied* by

ANCT as given in paragraph 3.4 of the draft Local Government Finance Report 2004/05, *multiplied* by

the share of ANCT for the appropriate class of authority as given in Annex B of the draft Local Government Finance Report (England) 2004–05.

2003–04 adjusted grant is the sum of the following items:

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's estimate of the authority's share of the Distributable Amount (Redistributed National Non-domestic Rates) calculated in accordance with section 6 of the Local Government Finance Report 2003–04, after adjusting for changes in the functions of councils or the financing of particular services, *plus*

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's estimates of the authority's share of Revenue Support Grant calculated in accordance with section 3 of the Local Government Finance Report 2003–04, after adjusting for changes in the functions of councils or the financing of particular services, *plus*

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary's estimate of the amount of any Police Grant payable to the authority for 2003–04 calculated in accordance with section 5 of the Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2003–04, after adjusting for changes in the functions of councils or the financing of particular services.

Further information on how the 2003–04 adjusted grants are calculated may be found at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0405/adjpap.pdf

Local Government

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the additional £344 million allocated to local authorities in December 2003 by the Treasury will be incorporated into the Revenue Support Grant settlement figure for future years. [150136]

Mr. Raynsford: The additional £340 million which Government have made available for local authorities in 2004–05 is a one-off payment for this year. The amount of money available for local government beyond 2004–05 will be as set out in the relevant Spending Review.

However, the extra funding put into the 2004–05 settlement will be taken into account when calculating floors and ceilings for future years.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on the issuing of directions to local authorities before those authorities have completed local consultations on the matters to which such directions relate; and if he will make a statement. [150808]

Mr. Raynsford: The Minister for Local and Regional Government will exercise powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 and other comparable legislation when there is clear evidence that an authority is failing either to discharge its functions adequately or failing to meet its statutory obligations. Further details are set out in the Protocol on "Central government engagement in poorly performing local authorities" http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_609124.pdf

Phone Boxes

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many derelict phone boxes there were in each London Borough at the latest date for which data is available. [151123]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

Policy on public call boxes is a matter for the Office of Communications (Ofcom) and I understand the Chief Executive of Ofcom will be writing to the hon. Member shortly.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from the *(a)* British chambers of commerce, *(b)* Confederation of British Industry and *(c)* Institute of Directors on proposals to establish elected regional assemblies; what response he has made; and if he will place in the Library copies of the exchanges of correspondence on this issue. [151005]

Mr. Raynsford: After the White Paper was published the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received one response each from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the British Chamber of Commerce. Each received a reply thanking them for their comments.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also received letters from a number of individual chambers of commerce.

It is not the practice to disclose the contents of correspondence by placing it in the Library. However a summary of the responses to the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice" are available in the Library of the House.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* date and *(b)* venues were of the public consultations on the powers of the proposed regional assemblies for the (i) North West, (ii) North East and (iii) Yorkshire and the Humber. [151889]

Mr. Raynsford: A series of public hearings on the powers of the proposed regional assemblies will take place across the three northern regions. The dates and venues of the hearings have yet to be decided.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 2 February 2004

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Serious Fraud Office

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General how many *(a)* allegations and *(b)* reports of bribery of a foreign public official by a UK company or individual have been forwarded to the Serious Fraud Office by the Fraud Section of the Department of Justice in the US since 1997; and on what dates they were received. [151523]

The Solicitor-General: The SFO has received no reports of allegations of bribery of a foreign public official by a UK company or individual from the US Department of Justice since 1997.

One request for mutual legal assistance has been made involving a suspicion of bribery. In this instance the alleged offences took place prior to the implementation of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General how many allegations of bribery of a foreign public official the Serious Fraud Office received between November 1997 and February 2002; and how many of these allegations led to an investigation. [151403]

The Solicitor-General: The SFO have identified four cases referred to it between November 1997 and February 2002 where bribery of a foreign official has been one of the allegations. None of these cases have resulted in an investigation.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General how many of the requests for mutual legal assistance on corruption offences received by the Serious Fraud Office have *(a)* indicated an offence by a UK individual or company and *(b)* led to an investigation by the SFO into a possible UK offence. [151404]

The Solicitor-General: Prior to the implementation of the Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001, the SFO did not record the category of offences referred for mutual legal assistance by foreign authorities.

Since February 2002, the SFO has identified three mutual legal assistance requests where there may be suspicion of corruption offences of persons overseas involving UK citizens or companies.

These requests have not resulted in a domestic investigation. Two of the requests are still being assessed and the relevant offences in the other request took place prior to the implementation of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General whether the Serious Fraud Office has received additional resources for enforcing Part 12 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 since February 2002. [151405]

The Solicitor-General: The SFO has received no additional resource since February 2002 specifically for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting using the provisions of Part 12 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001.

As part of the 2002 Spending Review, the resource budget of the Serious Fraud Office will rise to £35.34 million by the end of the 2005–06 financial year. The Serious Fraud Office plans to use some of this resource to expand its permanent staff numbers from 232 to approximately 300 by the end of that financial year.

The Serious Fraud Office does not allocate its staff resource to a particular type of crime or case. Each case referred to the SFO is assessed on its individual merits, and this includes allegations of bribery by UK citizens or companies overseas.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Commonwealth Scholarships Commission

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development who the members of the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission were on 1 January 2004; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151825]

Hilary Benn: The 14 members of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission were:

Member	*First Appointed*	*Current Appointment Ends*
Professor Trudy Harpham (Chair)	[1]12.12.01	11.12.04
Professor William Hill (Deputy Chair)	[2]01.03.98	28.02.04
Professor Jang B. Dilawari	01.03.98	28.02.04
Mr Sharon Huttly	01.01.02	31.12.04
Professor Maxwell Irvine	01.01.02	31.12.04
Professor David Johns	01.01.02	31.12.04
Ms Caren Levy	01.04.00	31.03.06
Dr Derek Miles	01.04.00	31.03.06
Professor John Morgan	01.08.02	31.07.05
Dr Hilary Perraton	01.05.02	30.04.05
Dr Patricia Richardson	01.04.00	31.03.06
Professor Timothy Shaw	01.05.02	30.04.05
Professor Gurharpal Singh	01.01.02	31.12.04
Professor Martin Snaith	01.01.02	31.12.04

[1] As Chair. Member of Commission since 1 March 1998

[2] To the Commission. Appointed Deputy Chair on 12 December 2001

The Chair of the Commission receives an annual honorarium of £5,000. All other Commission appointments are unremunerated, but those serving on the Selection Committee receive an honorarium of £200 per meeting.

Departmental Staff (Disability)

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will set out the number of employees in his Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148988]

Hilary Benn: As at April 2003, there were 23 members of staff with a disability.

Type of Disability	*Number of DFID Staff*
Hearing Impairment	8
Visual Impairment	[1]—
Speech Impairment	[1]—
Mobility Impairment	5
Physical Impairment	[1]—
Reduced Physical Capacity	[1]—
Severe disfigurement	[1]—
Learning difficulties	[1]—
Mental Illness	0
Other	0
Total	23

[1]— Denotes a figure where the number of staff is less than five. The actual numbers in these categories are not published in order to protect the privacy of individual members of staff.

At DFID, staff with disabilities can often fall into more than one of the above categories; where this is the case, they have been assigned to the category relating to their primary disability. DFID is a member of the cross-departmental Cabinet Office Disability Working Group, the primary purpose of which is to improve data collection, monitoring and declaration within the Civil Service.

Direct Budget Support

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of fiduciary risk for direct budget support. [152083]

Hilary Benn: DFID has developed a comprehensive approach to assessing and managing the fiduciary risks associated with direct budget support, which has been agreed with the UK's National Audit Office.

Firstly, a thorough evaluation of the recipient government's public financial management and accountability procedures, systems, practices and associated risks must be carried out. We have set out eight good practice principles and 15 related benchmarks which provide a framework both to ensure that adequate and sufficient information is obtained and that a broad assessment can be undertaken.

Secondly, the recipient government must have a credible programme to improve public financial management and if necessary to incorporate temporary safeguards to mitigate identified risks. The decision to provide direct budget support is made where the potential development benefits justify the risk involved. DFID's policy in this area is clearly identified in the published document "Managing Fiduciary Risk When Providing Budget Support".

DFID is working with other development agencies and international financial institutions to harmonise approaches to fiduciary risk management, thereby limiting the burden placed on governments to meet the requirements of different donors and lenders. This includes harmonisation of donor assessment procedures.

Iraq

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on humanitarian aid to Iraq. [151683]

Hilary Benn: DFID has committed £220 million towards humanitarian and reconstruction work in Iraq since the beginning of 2003. In spite of difficulties resulting from the security situation in Iraq, there is no humanitarian crisis in the country. Significant progress has been made since the end of the conflict in restoring essential services, maintaining the Public Distribution System for food rations, reopening hospitals and schools, and beginning the process of longer term reconstruction.

US$33 billion in grants and soft loans was pledged for the reconstruction of Iraq at the Madrid Donors' Conference in October, including over US$18 billion from the USA. The Coalition Provisional Authority, together with Iraqi Ministries, are making significant progress with the reconstruction effort.

DFID will publish its interim Country Assistance Paper for Iraq shortly.

Sudan

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact that the Government of Sudan's rezoning of camps for internally displaced persons around Khartoum is having on *(a)* levels of homelessness and *(b)* other humanitarian requirements in the region; and if he will make a statement. [151202]

Hilary Benn: DFID continues to be concerned about the protection and assistance afforded to all internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sudan and have provided humanitarian assistance, including to those in camps around Khartoum.

During my visit in December 2003 I visited one of the camps and saw how re-zoning has led to the demolition of homes. I raised the need for proper support for IDPs, following the rezoning with the Government of Sudan. HM Ambassador has also raised this issue with the Government of Sudan, including the Wali (Governor) of Khartoum.

TRANSPORT

Dengie Village Link

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total cost of public subsidy for the Dengie Village Link is in the *(a)* current and *(b)* next financial year. [152291]

Mr. McNulty: Dengie Village Link service was awarded £271,000 from Rural Bus Challenge funding and £106,274 from the Rural Bus Subsidy Grant for the current financial year 2003–04.

The recently announced Rural Bus Challenge award will provide £840,000 of funding to the scheme over the next three years 2004–05, 2005–06, 2006–07. Announcement of the Rural Bus Subsidy Grant for the next financial year has not yet been made.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passengers the Dengie Village Link carried in the last 12 month period; and how many passenger miles this represented. [152292]

Mr. McNulty: The total number of passengers carried by Dengie Village Link during the last 12 months from January 2003 to December 2003 was 72,191.

Passenger mileage figures are not recorded.

Edinburgh Airport

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of households which will be subjected to *(a)* a noise level of (i) 63dBa Leq or more and (ii) 69dBa Leq or more and *(b)* an increase in noise level of 3dBa Leq or more directly as a result of (A) the construction and (B) use of a second runway at Edinburgh airport as outlined in the aviation white paper. [151706]

Mr. McNulty: This information is set out in the Scottish Consultation Document and supporting technical reports. These estimate the number of people who would be affected by different levels of noise under a range of runway options at Edinburgh Airport including maximum use of the existing main runway, greater use of the existing crosswind runway and development of a new close parallel runway. Our analysis suggests that by 2030, the development of a new close parallel runway, assuming a—14 dBA technology improvement, would reduce the number of people affected within the 63 dBA 16 hour Leq contour by 300 with an increase of 200 people affected at the 69 dBA 16 hour Leq contour.

The numbers of houses within these contours for a new close parallel runway is estimated to be 200 at 63 dBA and 100 at 69 dBA.

Road Deaths

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many deaths have occurred on the A40 from *(a)* the M40 to the A312 junction, *(b)* the A312 junction to the A4005 junction and *(c)* from the A4005 junction to Westway in the last three years. [151486]

Dr. Howells: On the A40 from the M40 to the London Boundary there have been seven recorded injury accidents in the 36 month period to 31 December 2003. All accidents were coded as slight.

The section of the A40 inside London forms part of the Greater London Authority Road Network—now known as the Transport for London Road Network—and is the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). Further information concerning the accident statistics of the road should be obtained from:

Chris Lines
Head of London Road Safety Unit
Transport for London
Windsor House
42–50 Victoria Street
London SW1H OTL

Through Ticketing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on how he intends to encourage through ticketing, particularly where changes in bus contracts for certain routes require a passenger to use different companies for their journey. [151942]

Mr. McNulty: Local authorities have a power under s135 of the Transport Act 2000 to require local bus operators to provide through ticketing. The Bus Partnership Forum, which I chair, has produced four templates intended for use as model ticketing schemes, including one that provides an example of a through-ticketing scheme involving different companies. We are placing the templates on the Department for Transport's website (under "Local Transport"), and I encourage all local transport authorities and bus operators to take advantage of these resources.

For services that are operated under contact to the local authority, there is nothing to prevent the authority imposing conditions as to ticket validity on those services.

Transport (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the figures for *(a)* reliability, *(b)* punctuality, *(c)* the public performance measure, and *(d)* complaints for each train operator operating services in Wales in the last year for which figures are available. [151750]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) measures train performance by the Public Performance Measure (PPM), which combines reliability and punctuality. It is published by train operator in the SRA's quarterly National Rail Trends (NRT). The latest publication covers performance to the year ending 30 September 2003 and is placed in the Library of the House.

Until March 2003, complaints data by train operator were published in the SRA's six monthly On Track publication. Copies of On Track are placed in the Library of the House. In future, complaints data by train operator will appear annually in Quarter 4 of NRT which will also act as an annual compendium of statistics. This will be published in the summer.

Mr. Wiggin To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the rail infrastructure improvement schemes and their projected cost *(a)* being carried out in Wales and *(b)* planned for Wales. [151752]

Mr. McNulty: There are no infrastructure improvement schemes currently in progress. The Vale of Glamorgan line is planned to re-open between Barry and Bridgend later this year, with two new stations to be built at Llanwit Major and Rhoose. This scheme is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on aviation in Wales since the publication of the Aviation White Paper. [151753]

Mr. McNulty: Since the publication of the White Paper we have received one representation requesting further information about its conclusions for Wales.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Employment

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what budget has been allocated for the enforcement of employment law in agriculture during the period covering the last two financial years; and how many enforcement officers are dedicated to investigating breaches of employment law in agriculture. [152096]

Alun Michael: The only employment law enforced by Defra is the Agricultural Wages Order made by the Agricultural Wages Board for England and Wales under the Agricultural Wages Act 1948. Initial enforcement is undertaken by the five members of Defra's Agricultural Wages Team at an annual cost of some £133,000. This process is complaint led and complaints are investigated by Agricultural Wages Inspectors based in the Department's Rural Payments Agency. Some 37 Rural Payments Agency staff are authorised to investigate agricultural wage complaints. In the 2002–03 financial year it is estimated that agricultural minimum wage investigations undertaken by the Rural Payments Agency utilised staff resources of just over 0.5 staff years at a cost of £12,000. Rural Payments Agency staff inputs between April and December 2003 totalled some 0.25 staff years at a cost of £6,000.

Avian Influenza

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what records her Department keeps of outbreaks of avian influenza among *(a)* poultry flocks, *(b)* poultry meat processors and *(c)* egg processors in EU member states in the last five years. [151962]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* Our records show the following outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in member states in the last five years. These have all been in poultry flocks:

Italy—1997 until April 2000;

Netherlands—March to May 2003;

Belgium—April 2003; and

Germany—May 2003.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what biosecurity measures the Government have in place to protect *(a)* poultry farmers and *(b)* consumers from (i) legal and (ii) illegal (A) poultry meat and (B) egg imports from countries in South East Asia which have reported an outbreak of avian influenza. [151963]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* Defra issued advice on biosecurity and on health and safety to the farming industry on 5 November 2003. In view of the avian influenza situation, we are writing to all known poultry keepers and to veterinary surgeons to highlight the problem and to reissue the advice.

There is no legal trade in poultry meat or eggs from South East Asian countries affected by avian influenza other than from Thailand. Prohibitions have been placed on imports from Thailand of meat, meat products and meat preparations from species susceptible to avian influenza.

HM Customs and Excise are responsible for measures to detect and prevent illegal imports into Great Britain of prohibited animal products They have put in place measures to address the possibility of illegally imported products. This included notification to all Customs staff of the new controls prohibiting imports from Thailand and ensuring controls are in place to prevent any trade imports in accordance with the EU Council Directive.

The Food Standards Agency advice is that eating chicken and eggs is not considered a risk to consumers. This is because the risk to people arises from close contact with live chickens that have the disease, and not through eating chicken or eggs.

Badgers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 522W, on badgers, whether the reference to the gassing of badgers being considered to be inhumane refers only to the use of hydrogen cyanide gas; and what gases are available for use for the slaughter of subterranean animals which have properties that do not engender distress in those animals. [150568]

Mr. Bradshaw: In his 1980 report, "Badgers, Cattle and Tuberculosis", Lord Zuckerman considered gassing as a method of capture. Having consulted the Government Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down, he recorded that:

> "the only likely chemical alternatives to cyanide are carbon monoxide and nerve gases. The latter, however, are too dangerous to handle, and the former is, weight for weight, significantly less toxic than cyanide, and therefore likely to prove less effective than cyanide in practice."

He recommended that work be carried out to devise improvements in gassing procedures and this work concentrated on hydrogen cyanide. The Krebs Report points out that the subsequent investigation:

> "... cast doubt on the humaneness of this method of killing because research showed that badgers did not die immediately underground."

The following pesticides are currently approved for the control of subterranean animals:

Cymag, containing sodium cyanide, which generates cyanide gas for rat and rabbit control; and

Luxan Talunex, and Phostoxin, both of which contain aluminium phosphide and generate phosphine gas for the control of moles, rats and rabbits.

These pesticides are approved on the basis that they are safe, effective, and do not cause unnecessary pain and suffering to the target animal.

Bottom Trawl Survey

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* standard trawl speed and *(b)* type of trawl gear is used by her Department's survey vessels in carrying out the International Bottom Trawl Survey in the North Sea. [149121]

Mr. Bradshaw: The trawl used for scientific surveys of bottom living fish in the North Sea is the GOV trawl ('Grande Ouverture Verticale'). This general purpose bottom trawl has a high headline of five to six metres, and is used where the target species are a mix of commercial whitefish such as cod, haddock, whiting, pout and saithe. The net also samples shoaling or pelagic species including herring and mackerel. Design, specification and operation of the GOV trawl are all agreed internationally and co-ordinated by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. The standard towing speed is four knots over the sea bed.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the survey vessels employed in carrying out the International Bottom Trawl Survey are *(a)* stern trawlers and *(b)* side trawlers. [149122]

Mr. Bradshaw: They are stern trawlers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the gear used by survey vessels carrying out the International Bottom Trawl Survey in the North Sea differs from the gear used by commercial trawlers in the same area. [149123]

Mr. Bradshaw: Yes. Commercial gear is rigged by individual skippers to suit local conditions and to maximise the catch of target species. It is regularly modified to follow the changes in the technical conservation legislation, and is frequently adjusted to improve catchability. Survey gear is chosen to fish both a wide range of species and a wide range of sizes including juvenile fish. It is maintained and operated to an internationally agreed specification without modification over time, so that the results of different national surveys can be combined. True comparisons can thus be made from year to year unaffected by technical changes.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cattle were slaughtered on average each year during *(a)* 1976 to 1982, *(b)* 1982 to 1988, *(c)* 1988 to 1997 and *(d)* 2003 because of TB, including reactors, dangerous contacts and IRs; and what percentage this represented of the national herd in each case. [150589]

Mr. Bradshaw: The data requested up to and including 1997 are provided in the table:

Period	*Average number of GB cattle slaughtered per year*[1]	*Percentage of GB national herd*
1976–82	955	0.01
1982–88	786	0.01
1988–97	2,215	0.02

[1] TB reactors plus contacts.

Source:
Animal Health—Report of the Chief Veterinary Officer 1976–97.

Provisional data indicate that 21,632 cattle[1] were slaughtered in Great Britain between 1 January and 30 November 2003. This equates to 0.24 per cent. of the national herd.

[1] TB reactors plus contacts. Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service database on 22 December 2003. Subject to change as more data become available.

EU Legislation

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the EU legislation her Department has had responsibility for implementing since its inception; and what the *(a)* EU deadline for implementation and *(b)* date of final United Kingdom implementation were in each case. [148595]

Alun Michael: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs plays a leading role in the UK's EU policy on the environment, agriculture, fisheries, animal and plant health. Between 8 June 2001 and 31 December 2003, 89 EU Directives, for which Defra has responsibility for implementation, were adopted.

The table lists the directives adopted together with:

(a) the EU deadline for transposition into domestic legislation.

(b) where, appropriate, the final United Kingdom transposition date.

Details of all Directives in force can be found on the Eur-Lex database available on the European Union's website.

Directive number	*Directive name*	*Transposition date*	*Date UK transposition completed*
2001/047/EC	Placing plant protection products on the market	31 December 2001	25 February 2002
2001/048/EC	Fixing maximum levels of pesticide residues	28 February 02	25 February 2002
2001/049/EC	Placing plant protection products on the market	31 December 2001	25 February 2002
2001/057/EC	Fixing maximum levels of pesticide residues	28 February 2002	25 February 2002
2001/064/EC	Marketing of fodder plant seed and cereal seed	31 August 2001	5 March 2003
2001/080/EC	Limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from large combustion plants	27 November 2002	9 September 2003
2001/081/EC	National emission ceilings for certain atmospheric pollutants	1 March 2002	10 January 2003
2001/082/EC	Community code relating to veterinary medicine products	27 November 2002	31 March 2003
2001/087/EC	Placing of plant protection products on the market to include acibenzolar-s-methyl cyclanilide, ferric phosphate, pymetrozine and pyraflufen-ethyl as active substances	31 March 2002	4 April 2002
2001/088/EC	Laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs	1 January 2003	23 October 2003
2001/089/EC	Community measures for the control of classical swine fever	31 October 2002	6 October 2003
2001/091/EC	Restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (hexachloroethane)	31 December 2002	30 June 2003
2001/093/EC	Laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs	1 January 2003	23 October 2003

Directive number	Directive name	Transposition date	Date UK transposition completed
2001/099/EC	Amending Annex I to Council Directive 91/414/EEC concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market to include glyphosate and thifensulfuron-methyl as active substances	1 January 2003	22 October 2002
2001/103/EC	Amending Annex I to Council Directive 91/414/EEC concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market to include 2.4 dichloroohenoxy acetic acid(2.4-D) as an active substance	1 April 2003	22 October 2002
2001/109/EC	Statistical surveys to be carried out by member states to determine potential of certain species of fruit trees	16 April 2002	15 May 2002
2002/003/EC	Relating to ozone in ambient air	9 September 2003	Full UK implementation not completed
2002/004/EC	Registration of establishments keeping laying hens	31 March 2003	Full UK implementation not completed
2002/005/EC	Amending Annex II to Council Directive 90/642/EEC as regards the fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues in and on certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables	31 August 2002	1 September 2002
2002/008/EC	Minimum conditions for examining vegetables and agricultural varieties	31 March 2002	12 April 2002
2002/018/EC	Amending Annex I to Council Directive 91/414/EEC concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market to include isoproturon as an active substance	30 June 2003	22 October 2002
2002/023/EC	Fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues in and on cereals, foodstuffs of animal origin and certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables respectively	31 August 2002	19 September 2002
2002/028/EC	Protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the community	31 March 2002	24 September 2002
2002/029/EC	Amending Directive 2001/32/EC as regards certain protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the community	31 March 2002	24 September 2002
2002/031/EC	Energy labelling of household air conditioners	1 January 2003	14 March 2003
2002/033/EC	Amending Directives 90/425/EEC and 92/118/EEC as regards health requirements for animal by-products	30 April 2003	30 June 2003
2002/036/EC	On protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community	1 April 2003	12 November 2003
2002/037/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include ethofumesate as an active substance	31 August 2003	6 March 2003
2002/040/EC	Commission Directive 2002/040/EC implementing Council Directive 92/75/EEC with regard to energy labelling of household electric ovens	31 December 2002	14 March 2003
2002/042/EC	Fixing maximum levels of pesticide residues	31 December 2002	11 April 2003
2002/045/EC	Relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (short-chain chlorinated paraffins)	6 July 2003	23 December 2003
2002/048/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include iprovalicarb, prosulfuron and sulfosulfuron as active substances	31 December 2002	6 March 2003
2002/053/EC	On the common catalogue of varieties of agricultural plant species (codified version)	n/a	n/a
2002/054/EC	On the marketing of beet seed (codified version)	n/a	n/a
2002/055/EC	On the marketing of vegetable seed (codified version)	n/a	n/a
2002/056/EC	On the marketing of seed potatoes (codified version)	n/a	n/a
2002/057/EC	On the marketing of seed of oil and fibre plants (codified version)	n/a	n/a
2002/960/EC	Laying down specific provisions for the control of African swine fever	30 June 2003	13 December 2003
2002/062/EC	Adapting to technical progress for the ninth time Annex I to Council Directive 76/769/EEC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States on marketing and use of (organostannic compounds)	31 October 2002	14 March 2003
2002/063/EC	Establishing community methods of sampling for the official control of pesticides residues in and on products of the plant and animal origin and repealing Directive 79/700/EEC	1 January 2003	7 April 2003
2002/064/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include cinidon-ethyl, cyhalofop butyl, famoxadone, florasulam, metalaxyl-M and picolinafen as active substances	31 March 2003	7 April 2003
2002/066/EC	Amending the Annexes to Directive 76/895/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards the fixing of maximum levels for pesticides residues in and on fruit and vegetables	30 November 2002	11 April 2003
2002/068/EC	On the marketing of seed of oil and fibre plants	30 June 2003	12 November 2003
2002/071/EC	Amending the Annexes to Directive 76/895/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards the fixing of maximum levels for pesticides residues (formothion, dimethoate and oxydemeton-methyl)	31 December 2002	11 April 2003
2002/076/EC	Fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues (metsulfuron methyl) in and on cereals and certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables	31 December 2002	13 March 2003
2002/079/EC	Amending the Annexes to Council Directives 76/895/EEC, 86/362/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards fixing of maximum levels for certain pesticides residues	31 December 2002	15 April 2003
2002/081/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include flumioxazine as an active substance (Plant Protection Products)–	30 June 2003	7 April 2003
2002/089/EC	On protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community	1 January 2005	Full UK implementation not completed

Directive number	Directive name	Transposition date	Date UK transposition completed
2002/097/EC	Amending the Annexes to Council Directives 86/362/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards fixing of maximum levels for pesticide residues in cereals and foodstuffs in products of animal and plant origin	30 June 2003	15 April 2003
2002/099/EC	Laying down the animal health rules governing the production, processing, distribution and introduction of products of animal origin for human consumption	1 April 2005	Full UK implementation not completed
2002/100/EC	Fixing of maximum residue levels for azoxystrobin	31 March 2003	15 April 2003
2003/002/EC	Relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of arsenic	30 June 2003	23 December 2003
2003/005/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include deltamethrin as active substance	30 April 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/011/EC	Relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (pentabromodiphenyl ether octabromodiphenyl ether)	15 February 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/021/EC	As regards certain protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the Community	31 March 2003	12 November 2003
2003/022/EC	On protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community	31 March 2003	12 November 2003
2003/023/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include imazamox, oxasulfuron, ethoxysulfuron, foramsulfuron, oxadiargyl and cyazofamid as active substances	31 December 2003	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/031 EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include 2,4-DB, betacyfluthrin, cyfluthrin, iprodione, linuron, maleic hydrazide and pendimethalin as active substances	30 June 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/035/EC	Providing for public participation in respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment	25 June 2005	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/039/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include propireb and propyzamide as active substances	30 September 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/043/EC	Laying down the animal health requirements applicable to intra-Community trade in and imports of semen of domestic animals of the bovine species	1 July 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/045/EC	On the marketing and use of seed of oil and fibre plants	31 December 2003	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/046/EC	As regards certain protected zones exposed to particular plant health risks in the Community	15 June 2003	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/047/EC	On protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community	15 June 2003	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/050/EC	Reinforcement of controls on movements of ovine and caprine animals	1 July 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/053/EC	Relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (nonylphenol, nonylphenol ethoxylate and cement)	17 July 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/060/EC	Fixing maximum levels for certain pesticide residues in and on cereals, foodstuffs of animal origin and certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables	30 June 2003	14 November 2003
2003/061/EC	Amending various Directives as regards Community comparative tests and trials	10 October 2003	Not to be implemented in member states
2003/062/EC	Maximum pesticide residue levels for hexaconazole, clofentezine, myclobutanyl and prochloraz	31 July 2003	14 November 2003
2003/066/EC	Energy labelling of household electric refrigerators, freezers and their combinations	30 June 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/068/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include trifloxystrobin, carfentrazone-ethyl, meso-trone, fenamidone and isoxaflutole as active substances	31 March 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/069/EC	Maximum residue levels for chlormequat, lambda-cyhalothrin, kresoxim-methyl, azoxystrobin and certain dithiocarbamates	31 July 2003	14 November 2003
2003/070/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include mecoprop, mecoprop-P and propiconazole as active substances	30 November 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/074/EC	Concerning the prohibition on the use in stock farming of certain substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action and of beta-agonists	14 October 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/079/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include Coniothyrium minitrans as an active substance	30 June 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/081/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include molinate, thiram and ziram as active substances	31 January 2005	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/082/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC as regards standard phrases for special risks and safety precautions for plant protection products	30 July 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/084/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include flurtamone, flufenacet, iodosulfuron, dimethenamide-p, picoxystrobin, frosthiazate-silthiofam as active substances	30 June 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/085/EC	Community measures for the control of foot-and-mouth disease	30 June 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/087/EC	Establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community	31 December 2003	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/090/EC	As regards the characteristics to be covered as a minimum by the examination and the minimum conditions for examining certain varieties of agricultural plant species	31 March 2004	Full UK implementation not completed

Directive number	Directive name	Transposition date	Date UK transposition completed
2003/091/EC	As regards the characteristics to be covered as a minimum by the examination and the minimum conditions for examining certain varieties of vegetable species	31 March 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/099/EC	On the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents	12 April 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/111/EC	Amending Annex II to Council Directive 92/34/EEC on the marketing of fruit plant propagating material and fruit plants intended for fruit production	31 October 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/112/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include paraquat as an active substance	30 April 2005	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/113/EC	Amending Annexes to Council Directives 86/362/EEC, 86/363/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards the fixing of maximum levels for certain pesticide residues in and on cereals, foodstuffs of animal origin and certain products of plant origin, including fruit and vegetables	1 June 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/116/EC	Amending Annexes II, III, IV and V to Council Directive 2000/29/EC as regards the harmful organism "Erwinia amylovora (Burr.) Winsl. Et al"	31 March 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/118/EC	Amending Annexes to Council Directives 76/895/EEC, 86/362/EEC and 90/642/EEC as regards maximum residue levels for acephate, 2,4-D and parathion-methyl	30 November 2004	Full UK implementation not completed
2003/119/EC	Amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC to include mesosulfron, propoxycarbazone and zoxamide as active substances	30 September 2004	Full UK implementation not completed

Farm Incomes

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average income of *(a)* arable, *(b)* beef, *(c)* dairy, *(d)* poultry, *(e)* pig, *(f)* sheep and *(g)* mixed farmers was in Lancashire in the latest year for which figures are available. [149936]

Alun Michael: The average net farm income for farms greater than eight ESUs in the county of Lancashire was £20,450 for the year ending February 2003. Due to lack of farm numbers in the source survey this can only be broken down into the following farm types:

	£000
Cattle and Sheep in the LFA	15,530
Dairy Farms	16,730
All other farm types	26,260

Data source:
Farm Business Survey

Net farm income is defined as the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant-type capital of the business. It includes income from non-agricultural activities that are fully integrated into the farming business and which depend on the existence of the core farming activity.

Farming Subsidies

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers in the United Kingdom received subsidies with a value of *(a)* €0 to €5,000, *(b)* €5,000 to €50,000 and *(c)* more than €50,000 in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2001–02, (iii) 2000–01 and (iv) 1999–2000. [144456]

Alun Michael: The following figures represent payments made in the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) Year (16 October to 15 October).

Payments on our financial systems are in Sterling. To generate the ranges in Euros the bands have been converted into sterling based on an average conversion rate for each EAGGF year.

These figures represent payments to English farmers. Information for other countries within the UK is a matter for their respective devolved assemblies.

EAGGF Year	€0 to €5,000	€5,000 to €50,000	Greater than €50,000
2002–03	88,398	39,823	4,936
2001–02	98,351	37,855	4,330
2000–01	97,182	39,169	4,962
1999–2000	92,220	38,030	4,062

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proceedings have been brought against shore-side dealers who handle black fish in each of the last 10 years. [150240]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the Sea Fishing (Enforcement of Community Control Measures) Order 2000 (SI 2000 No. 51) proceedings for the submission of false documentation, associated with the handling of black fish, may be taken against the representative (agent) of the master in respect of landing declarations, against the first seller of fish in respect of sales notes or the buyer of fish where the first marketing is not carried out by an auction centre or an authorised person or body and against the transporter of fish in respect of the transport documentation. There is a maximum of up to £50,000 for each offence committed on summary conviction.

Flooding

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when the Environment Agency will publish maps showing the climate change zone in relation to the one in 100 year floodplain; [148282]

(2) when the Environment Agency will publish policies on the incorporation of climate change calculation into the determination of floodplain. [148283]

Margaret Beckett: The Environment Agency's Flood Mapping Strategy of July 2003 outlines 2005 as the earliest date for delivery of the 'Flood Zones for year 2050' onto the National Flood and Coastal Defence Database. 'Flood Zones for year 2050' is a dataset to show planners the anticipated extent of a range of flood probabilities (including, for fluvial flooding, a zone showing the one per cent. or one in 100 year probability) in the year 2050, taking account of current guidance on climate change.

The Environment Agency follows government policies and guidance for climate change; for floodplain, this is found in PPG25. The 'Flood Zones for year 2050' will incorporate the climate change guidance found in Appendix A of PPG25, namely an allowance for sea level rise and an increase in fluvial flows of 20 per cent.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the results of the work commissioned by the Environment Agency to model the impact of a one in 100 year plus 20 per cent. flood on the River Thames will be available. [148284]

Margaret Beckett: I understand that the Environment Agency expect the final results from modelling the impact of various floods on the River Thames, including the one in 100 year plus 20 per cent. will be available by summer 2004.

Haddock

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what steps have been taken to encourage a consumer shift from cod to haddock; and what assessment she has made of the impact on the British fleet of such a shift; [150853]

(2) what assessment has been made of whether haddock is an acceptable retail alternative to cod; [150854]

(3) what plans she has to offer marketing assistance to fish wholesalers and retailers to encourage increased consumption of haddock by British consumers. [150857]

Mr. Bradshaw: Decisions on which species of fish to buy are for consumers to take. However the Sea Fish Industry Authority undertakes work to promote seafood consumption, and, with Seafood Scotland, is beginning a consumer campaign for marketing haddock.

Hill Farmers

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average income was for a hill farmer in Shrewsbury and Atcham in the last year. [151317]

Alun Michael: Estimates of farm business income are obtainable from the Farm Business Survey, but results are not available at constituency level because the size of the sample is too small.

Net farm income for full-time farms either wholly or mainly in the less favoured areas in the West Midlands Government Office Region in 2002–03, excluding farms involved in the compulsory FMD cull, was £12,000 per farm. This compares with a net farm income of £13,200 for the West Midlands Government Office Region as a whole and £16,600 for England.

Net farm income is the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant-type capital of the business.

Foot and Mouth Disease

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions have been initiated and are pending, by or on behalf of her Department against *(a)* contractors and *(b)* farmers, in respect of alleged fraudulent claims or other irregularities relating to (i) claims made for compensation, (ii) works undertaken on behalf of her Department, and (iii) animals slaughtered; how many court hearings have been completed; and how many of the prosecutions have been successful. [150555]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since 2001, no prosecutions have been commenced in relation to fraudulent claims by contractors for compensation or works undertaken on behalf of the Department. Three prosecutions were commenced into fraudulent claims for compensation by farmers: one farmer pleaded guilty, two farmers were acquitted. There are no outstanding prosecutions.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what value of payments remain unpaid to Welsh contractors employed during and following the foot and mouth disease outbreak. [151727]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare (Brian Cotter), on 6 January, *Official Report*, column 261W.

The Department is in dispute with four Welsh contractors over charges arising, or which are claimed to have arisen, from the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak. As these matters are ongoing it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what value of compensation payments remain unpaid to Welsh farmers as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak, broken down by *(a)* constituency and *(b)* local authority area. [151728]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no compensation payments due to Welsh farmers that remain unpaid as a result of the foot and mouth outbreak.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many compensation payments, of what value, have been paid to Welsh farmers as a result of the foot and mouth disease outbreak, broken down by *(a)* constituency and *(b)* local authority area. [151729]

Mr. Bradshaw: We cannot provide a breakdown of compensation payments by either constituency or local authority area. The compensation payments data is not held in that form.

However, we can provide the following breakdown of compensation payments made to Welsh farmers by county.

Payments

£

County	*Number*	*Total Amount*
Powys	991	41,470,929
Gwent	211	10,517,681
Mid Glamorgan	54	775,061
Clwyd	25	508,428
West Glamorgan	14	971,654
Dyfed	12	377,399
South Glamorgan	2	253,318
Totals	1,309	54,874,470

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the criteria are for interest payments to be made by her Department on outstanding foot and mouth disease claims; and if she will make a statement. [151839]

Mr. Bradshaw: The criteria will vary on a case by case basis and will depend on such things as the precise contractual terms providing for interest; the construction of the contract; the terms and applicability of The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998; and the validity and timeliness or otherwise of the applications for payment received.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many outstanding claims for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts remain to be processed by her Department; and what estimate has been made of the total liability. [151840]

Mr. Bradshaw: As the Department has paid businesses on the basis of the contractual terms agreed it does not believe there are any valid unpaid and outstanding invoices submitted by businesses to the Department for work undertaken in connection with the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001.

The Department is withholding £52.9 million from businesses in connection with charges arising from the provision of goods, services and works during the outbreak. In these cases, it believes on the basis of the quantum, accounting, technical and legal advice it has received that it was overcharged for goods, services and works during the outbreak. In all other cases, the Department has paid businesses for the goods, services and works provided in connection with the outbreak in 2001.

As at 29 January 2004 the Department is in serious dispute with 22 contractors and five of these disputes are currently in the civil courts, with more expected to follow.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money has been spent *(a)* internally and *(b)* on outside assistance on the disputing and forensic analysis of invoices submitted by Northumberland and Durham Machinery Ring Ltd for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts. [151841]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has spent *(a)* £2,480 internally and *(b)* £336,357 excluding VAT externally on professional services in connection with the forensic examination of the Northumberland and Durham Machinery Ring account pertaining to the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001.

This expenditure excludes the costs of the successful mediation on 20 January, which are the subject of standard confidentiality provisions agreed between the parties.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what arrangements have been made by her Department with organisations or persons rewarded by payment of commission, percentage or other means for securing reductions in invoices submitted by contractors for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts. [151842]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such arrangements have been made.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many invoices submitted for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts have been paid in full by her Department without negotiation or dispute as to quantum. [151843]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare (Brian Cotter) on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 260–62W. The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost, as it would require a review of all applications for payment submitted over four financial years in connection with the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many of the claims made for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts which have been settled by her Department have been settled within the allocated time period. [151844]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare (Brian Cotter) on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 260–62W.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many claims made for foot and mouth disease contracts submitted to her Department have been settled to date. [151845]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare (Brian Cotter) on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 260–62W.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many claims for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts have yet to be settled by her Department. [151846]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is withholding £52.9 million from businesses in connection with charges arising from the provision of goods, services and works during the outbreak. In these cases, it believes on the basis of the quantum, accounting, technical and legal advice it has received that it was overcharged for goods, services and works during the outbreak. In all other cases, the Department has paid businesses for the goods, services and works provided in connection with the outbreak in 2001.

As at 29 January 2004 the Department is in serious dispute with 22 contractors and five of these disputes are currently in the civil courts, with more expected to follow.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many claims for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts have been submitted to her Department since the outbreak of the disease. [151847]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department considers it has received 30 claims for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts since the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money has been spent *(a)* internally and *(b)* on outside assistance on the disputing and forensic analysis of invoices submitted by businesses for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts. [151848]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare (Brian Cotter), on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 259W.

Internal costs total £430,000 to date.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much interest has been paid by her Department on outstanding claims for foot and mouth disease contracts; what estimate has been made of likely outstanding payments; and if she will make a statement. [151849]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare (Brian Cotter), on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 259–60W.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many of the claims made for foot and mouth disease clean-up contracts which have been settled by her Department with *(a)* companies and *(b)* individuals based in Somerset were settled within the allocated time period. [152001]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare (Brian Cotter), on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 261W.

The Department is in dispute with one contractor in Somerset over charges arising, or which are claimed to have arisen, from the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak. As this matter is on-going, it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Trawl Speeds

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what influence trawl speed has on *(a)* species caught and *(b)* size of fish caught. [149125]

Mr. Bradshaw: Trawl speed can influence the capture of different species, with faster swimmers requiring a faster towing speed, and the duration of tow may affect the size of fish caught, since larger fish may be able to swim for longer before they tire and fall back into the net.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Specialist Sports Colleges

10. **Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on specialist sports colleges in *(a)* England and *(b)* the Pudsey constituency. [151931]

Mr. Caborn: There are currently 228 specialist sports colleges in England, and a further 30 will join them from September 2004. The Government aims to establish 400 specialist sports colleges by September 2005, subject to sufficient high quality applications. Within Pudsey, Priesthorpe Secondary School became a specialist sports college in 2002.

Glasgow Science Centre

11. **Mr. Sarwar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the level of financial assistance provided by the Government to Millennium projects in Scotland, with particular reference to the Glasgow Science Centre. [151932]

Mr. Caborn: The Millennium Commission, rather than the Government, has provided £209 million of National Lottery funding for Millennium projects in Scotland. £36.2 million has been awarded to the Glasgow Science Centre. The Glasgow Science Centre as also been funded by public bodies under the Scottish Executive, which is responsible for Science Centre policy within Scotland.

Licensing Act

12. **Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received from sports clubs about the impact of the Licensing Act 2003. [151933]

Mr. Caborn: We have received representations from several hon. Members, the Central Council for Physical Recreation, small sports clubs and from individual members of small sports clubs. These representations relate mainly to the issue of the fee levels which we intend to set shortly for small sports clubs under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003.

Arts Facilities

14. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent studies her Department has conducted on the economic benefits to local communities of investment in arts facilities. [151935]

Estelle Morris: My Department has commissioned a review of the evidence of the economic, social and environmental impact of culture in regeneration. The findings will be published shortly, alongside a document consulting on proposals for maximising culture's impact on communities.

Community Fund/New Opportunities Fund

15. **Ann McKechin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in merging the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund. [151936]

Estelle Morris: The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and the Community Fund are working closely together already. A single Chief Executive has been appointed. Full merger will happen when the legislation is in place.

Playing Fields

16. **Jane Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the sale of playing fields. [151938]

Mr. Caborn: Planning guidance ensures that local authorities must fully consider the sporting needs of communities in decisions involving playing fields.

But community need may better be addressed by developing other forms of sports facility. Planning applications involving playing fields in 2001–02 produced 447 new or refurbished sports facilities worth £274 million.

Olympic Bid

17. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made on the London Olympics bid. [151939]

Tessa Jowell: The first stage of the bid, the Applicant Questionnaire, was delivered to the International Olympic Committee on 15 January.

The Government continues to work closely with the other stakeholders to develop the outline proposals in the Questionnaire.

Science and Technology

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support her Department is giving to the promotion of science and technology via museums. [151929]

Estelle Morris: We have increased revenue grant-in-aid to our sponsored science and technology museums by 23 per cent. in real terms to over £70 million per annum since 1997–98, including funding for free admission to their permanent collections. The number of visits to these museums has increased by 73 per cent. to 7.6 million.

TREASURY

Labour Disputes

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the average cost of working days lost owing to labour disputes in the *(a)* public and *(b)* private sector in each year between 1995 and 2003; and if he will make a statement. [151832]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 2 February 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question about the estimate of the average yearly cost of working days lost owing to labour disputes in the private and public sector each year since 1995. (151832)

The Office for National Statistics produces figures on the number of working days lost as a result of labour disputes, but does not estimate the cost of these lost days.

Whilst there are no statistics on numbers of working days lost that specifically relate to the public sector, figures are available for the public administration, education and health industries sectors which encompass most of the public sector. In the table below, the data for these sectors (Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) sectors 75, 80 and 85) are presented alongside data for the rest of the economy for 1995 to 2002, the last year for which annual data are available.

Working days lost due to UK labour disputes, 1995–2002

thousands

	Public administration, education and health industries (SIC 75, 80, 85)		*Rest of Economy*	
Year	*No of days lost*	*Percentage of all days lost*	*No of days lost*	*Percentage of all days lost*
1995	178	43	237	57
1996	295	23	1,008	77
1997	65	28	170	72
1998	50	18	232	82
1999	66	27	176	73
2000	221	44	278	56
2001	331	63	194	37
2002	1,013	77	310	23

Area Cost Adjustment (Statistics)

Mr. Luff: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reason the Office for National Statistics does not release *(a)* New Earnings Survey micro-data since 2000, *(b)* details of the sensitivity of regression results, *(c)* alternative estimates using Labour Force Survey data and *(d)* disaggregated Labour Force Survey data to researchers investigating area cost adjustment calculations; and if he will make a statement. [151128]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Peter Luff, dated 2 February 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the availability of data to researchers. (151128)

Since 2002 the Office for National Statistics Micro-data Release Panel has implemented revisions to procedures for releasing all micro-data held by ONS. The procedures are derived from the principles of National Statistics, its Code of Practice and protocols, and the law.

New Earnings Survey (NES) micro-data up to 2003, the latest year for which data are available, have been released to other government departments. NES micro-data are available for statistical research purposes through the ONS "virtual data-lab", which provides access to micro-datasets on ONS premises under controlled access conditions, in line with the Code of Practice and protocols. A longitudinal NES dataset used by some academic and government researchers was suspended from 2001 when I initiated a review of the access contracts and methods. Work is now underway to make this dataset available through the virtual data-lab, under different contractual arrangements and methods consistent with the Code of Practice.

Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates of employees' earnings by region, occupation and industry are published in the LFS Quarterly Supplement which is available on the ONS web-site: www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=545&More=N. Anonymised copies of all LFS micro datasets are available to researchers from the UK Data Archive (UKDA). Information about this service is available from the UKDA web-site: www.data-archive.ac.uk. Access requests by government and academic researchers to confidential (non-anonymised) copies of LFS micro-data are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Micro-data Release Panel.

Any research studies carried out by ONS using regression analysis of either NES or LFS earnings data would usually be published if of significance, and of publishable standard. No specific work on the sensitivity of regression results exists for publication, or has been prepared for other reasons. In general, micro-data access is a well recognised statistical service, and all researchers have access to more statistical records than in most countries in Europe.

Block Grant (Scotland)

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value was of the block grant allocation to the *(a)* Scottish Office and *(b)* Scottish Executive in each of the last 10 years; and what the projected figure is for the next two years in *(a)* cash and *(b)* constant terms. [151967]

Mr. Boateng: Information on the block grant from the Scotland Office to the Scottish Executive and the Scotland Office's own spending is contained in the Scotland Office's Estimates and the Scotland Office Departmental Report (Cm 5927), and prior to devolution in the Scottish Office's Estimates. Information on the Scottish Departmental Expenditure Limit for the period 1998–99 to 2005–06 is contained in table 1.2 of the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses in nominal terms and in table 1.4 in real terms.

Central Government Spending

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the loss to public funds was of gross administrative expenditure in central Government for *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04. [R] [145609]

Mr. Gordon Brown *[holding answer 5 January 2004]:* I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to him on 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 448W.

Customs and Excise

Mr. Flook: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the last occasion was that a British citizen was charged under *(a)* section 42 of the Customs Consolidation Act 1876 and *(b)* section 170(2) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979; and what resulted from these charges. [151855]

John Healey: Section 42 of the Customs Consolidation Act 1876 imposes a prohibition on the import of indecent and obscene articles. Section 170(2) of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 creates the criminal offence of contravening this prohibition. The last occasion on which Customs charged a British Citizen under this legislation was 31 January 2003. This person was sentenced on 12 March 2003 to a three-year Community Rehabilitation Order and ordered to register as a sex offender for five years.

Since April 2003 Customs and Excise have refocused their strategy for detections of such material at import, placing greater emphasis on working more closely with other agencies, including the passing of intelligence to the police for further investigation and prosecution as appropriate.

ECOFIN

Mr. Hood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the outcome was of the ECOFIN Council held on 20 January; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [150137]

Mr. Gordon Brown: I attended ECOFIN on 20 January.

The Irish Presidency presented its work programme. The focus of the first three months would be on the Lisbon economic reform agenda and enlargement for the final three months. I stressed the importance of the Lisbon Agenda, the need for ECOFIN Ministers to be fully engaged in the forthcoming debate on future financing of the EU and the importance of re-invigorating the EU/US economic relationship.

The Council agreed opinions on the updated Stability and Convergence programmes for Denmark, Austria, Finland and Sweden.

The Council discussed the Report of the Employment Task Force (Kok Report) on the basis of a note prepared by the Economic Policy Committee. The report set out that the EU was likely to miss the 2005 and 2010 Lisbon employment targets without immediate implementation of labour market reforms. I welcomed the report and its recommendations and stressed the onus was now on member states to demonstrate the political will to reform. The Presidency agreed concluding that follow-up to the Kok report was a priority for the spring Council.

Following a French request, the Council again briefly discussed VAT reduced rates. There was no consensus and the Presidency concluded that the item would return to a future ECOFIN. The Council also discussed a French paper on raising minimum rates on tobacco tax. The Commission and Presidency agreed there was little prospect of agreeing further harmonisation of rates.

The Commission reported to the Council on discussions with the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) on proposed revisions to International Accounting Standards 32 and 39, relating to accounting for financial instruments. The Presidency welcomed the setting up of a High Level Group under IASB chairmanship to help find agreement on the outstanding issues.

The location of the three Lamfalussy Committees of banking, insurance and securities supervisors was agreed at lunch. The Banking Committee will be located in London, the Insurance Committee in Frankfurt and the Securities Committee will remain in Paris.

No votes were taken at the meeting.

Gold Receipts

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been received from the sale of gold since 7 May 1999; how the receipts have been reinvested; and what the current market value of those reinvestments is. [152144]

Ruth Kelly: The proceeds from the sale of part of the United Kingdom's gold holdings between 6 July 1999 and 6 March 2002 totalled approximately $3.5 billion. These proceeds were invested in interest-bearing foreign currency assets in broadly the same proportion as currently held in the net foreign currency reserves (40 per cent. dollars; 40 per cent. euros; 20 per cent. yen). The gold sales reduced risk by around 30 per cent. (as measured by value-at-risk) and are not expected to deliver a loss in return when measured over the medium to long-term, the appropriate time horizon for such a decision.

The United Kingdom has been at the forefront internationally in promoting openness and transparency in reserves data. Details, including currency composition, are available from the Bank of England's website: www.bankofenqland.co.uk. The investment policy for the reserves is also outlined in the Exchange Equalisation Account Financial Accounts, most recently published on 1 December 2003 for financial year 2002–03. We do not provide market-sensitive information, however, about individual assets within the reserves portfolio.

Iraq

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the cost of United Kingdom military operations in Iraq. [151656]

Mr. Boateng: Of the £3 billion set aside by the Chancellor in last year's Budget to cover the cost of operations in Iraq, £1 billion was drawn down in the spring Supplementary Estimate for 2002–03. The remaining £2 billion of this special reserve has been carried forward to 2003–04.

In the recent PBR the Chancellor announced a further £500 million set aside for this financial year and a further £300 million for 2004–05 as a prudent allowance to cover Iraq and our continuing international commitment to the war on terrorism.

Public Service Agreements

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on value for money in public service agreements relating to the environment. [151682]

Mr. Boateng: The latest Public Service Agreement (PSA) for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was published in "2002 Spending Review—Public Service Agreements 2003–2006" (Cm 5571). DEFRA's PSA included a value for money target, focusing on a reduction in the unit cost of administering Common Agricultural Policy payments, and an increase in electronic service delivery capability. DEFRA published a report of performance against this target in its Autumn Performance Report in November 2003 (Cm 6017), and will update this further in the departmental report later this spring.

Tax Stamp Regimes

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* countries which have abolished tax stamp regimes for whisky and other spirits, *(b)* countries which, after consideration, decided against introducing tax stamps and *(c)* countries which have tax stamps regimes; and what the outcome of those discussions was. [151694]

John Healey: Officials are in regular discussions with other countries on these matters. Tax stamps have been introduced in 40 different countries for a variety of reasons ranging from quality assurance to tackling fraud. Of eight European Union and accession countries where direct inquiries have been made, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Poland and the Czech Republic have no plans to withdraw their schemes. Greece have withdrawn their 'quality' marker stamp and Belgium decided after consideration not to introduce tax stamps. Additionally, we are aware that the USA withdrew their tax stamps in 1985 when the 1954 law governing marks on spirits was repealed. The variety of reasons for introduction and withdrawal of tax stamp schemes highlight that direct comparisons between different countries' excise regimes cannot be easily drawn.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect on free trade of tax stamps. [151695]

John Healey: Under formal European Union agreements (Council Directive 92/12/EEC) member states may require the use of tax stamps or other fiscal marks on products subject to excise duty. Any such scheme must ensure that the tax stamps do not create obstacles to the free movement of the products.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what effect he expects the electronic control of movements systems which will be in place in the EU by 2009 to have on tax stamp regimes. [151696]

John Healey: The EU Excise Movement and Control System (EMCS) should be introduced by July 2009 and should reinforce the Government's strategy to tackle alcohol duty fraud. It will allow member states to monitor, in real time, the despatch and receipt of movements of alcohol, as well as tobacco and certain fuel products, between tax warehouses located in different member states. EMCS will be an improvement on the current paper-based system of Accompanying Administrative Documents. However, tax stamps are still likely to have a useful role to play in the detection of smuggled and diverted products after the full implementation of EMCS.

Trade Balance (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the balance of trade between Wales and *(a)* the

rest of the United Kingdom, *(b)* the rest of the European Union and *(c)* the rest of the world was for each year since 1997. [151757]

Ruth Kelly: Figures for trade in goods between Wales and the European Union, and for Wales and the rest of the world are shown in the following table:

Estimates of regional trade

£ million

Wales	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*January to September 2003*
Exports to EU	4,171	4,284	4,493	4,884	4,788	4,691	3,422
Imports from EU	1,299	1,649	2,005	2,234	1,999	2,376	1,821
Exports to Rest of the World	1,593	1,521	1,819	2,288	2,311	1,928	1,909
Imports from Rest of the World	2,310	2,671	3,515	3,604	3,709	3,475	2,210

Source:
Published in the 2003 Quarter 3 Regional Trade Statistics Press Release on 18 December 2003.

HM Customs and Excise do not collect information on the movement of traded goods between countries or regions within the UK.

These figures exclude the value of services and other intangibles included in the Balance of Payments, as the Balance of Payments estimates are published only for the UK as a whole.

VAT

Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total amount raised from VAT charged on goods imported into the United Kingdom was in each of the last three available financial years. [151723]

John Healey: The amount of import VAT received in the last three financial years was:

	£ million
2000–01	17,001
2001–02	16,194
2002–03	15,523

These figures include ex-warehouse VAT and are published in the Customs and Excise VAT Factsheet at www.uktradeinfo.com.

Importers registered for VAT reclaim import VAT on their VAT returns.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

"Made in Britain" Identification

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has made to the European Commission with respect to their proposal that the "Made in Britain" identification be replaced by Made in Europe; and if she will make a statement. [150776]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: No proposal has been made to abolish national trading marks and replace them by a European Union wide trademark. The European Commission has produced a discussion document setting out options in considering possible EU origin marking. The document does not suggest abolition of national markings such as "Made in Britain". The Government are currently finalising its response to the Commission having consulted interested parties in the UK, including business, trade unions, retailers and consumer organisations. At a meeting with EU Trade Ministers on 25 January I made it clear that British companies would want to retain the ability to say "Made in Britain" or use other current marks and was assured by Commissioner Pascal Lamy that there was no proposal to interfere with companies continuing to do so.

Business Link

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will assess the impact of Business Link on company productivity. [152055]

Nigel Griffiths: Two studies of the impact of Business Link have concluded that it provides good value for money in terms of additional jobs, turnover, profits, assets, exports and productivity growth. The work will be updated this summer.

An integral part of the new Business Link Performance Management Framework is the inclusion of a Gross Value Added measure. This enables Business Link Operators to quantify—in terms of wealth creation and productivity improvements—the impact of their support to businesses with whom they have built a more intensive relationship. Data will be available later this year.

Call Centres

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she intends to publish the competitiveness survey of UK call centres which her Department has commissioned. [151828]

Ms Hewitt: The study will examine the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centres. Subject to progress of the study, we will publish a report on the study and its findings in April 2004.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150263]

Ms Hewitt: The Department of Trade and Industry and its agencies have reorganised their grading structures since 1997. This makes drawing direct comparison between current grades and those in 1997 very difficult.

In light of this, the following two tables have been provided:

Table 1 shows a comparison of the total number of staff in the Department of Trade and Industry on 1 January 1997 and the current date;

Table 2 shows a breakdown of the current staff in DTI and its agencies in terms of the closest equivalent of the old Civil Service grades.

To produce an equivalent table for 1997 would incur disproportionate cost.

Table 1: Staff on 1 January 1997 and as of the current date

	Number
1 January 1997	9,143
23 January 2004	9,224

Table 2: Breakdown of the current grade structure

Grade Level	*Headcount*
AA Level	498
AO Level	2,346
EO Level	1,576
HEO Level	1,806
SEO Level	834
Grade 7 Level	1,089
Grade 6 Level	398
Faststream	141
Senior Civil Service	468
Unknown Grade[1]	68
Grand total	9,224

[1] Unknown grade includes staff who have joined the Department from other organisations and who have not been fully assimilated into DTI systems.

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 5 December 2003 concerning Dr. Walter King of Totnes and insurance cover for US markets. [152199]

Ms Hewitt: My office has no record of having received the letter from the hon. Member.

Dark Matter Project, Saltburn

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent on the Dark Matter Project at Boulby Mine, Loftus, Saltburn-by-the-Sea since its inception. [149216]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The DTI has, through the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC), spent £13.366 million on the Dark Matter experiment at Boulby since 1992. This figure includes £2.4 million of a Joint Infrastructure Fund (JIF) award totalling £3.1 million.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding the specifying of energy efficiency aims in the Energy White Paper. [151872]

Mr. Timms: The Energy White Paper was collectively agreed by Ministers (including the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) before being presented to Parliament in February 2003. Since then my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has met regularly with colleagues from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in a variety of fora, to discuss sustainable development and energy issues. Energy efficiency and the implementation of the energy efficiency aims in the Energy White Paper have formed part of those discussions.

Export Credits Guarantee Department (Iraq)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the contracts for which Iraq incurred its outstanding debt to the Export Credit Guarantee Department, including the names of the projects and the UK companies concerned; and if she will make a statement on the Government's intention to recover this debt. [151718]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* ECGD has unrecovered claims of around £623 million arising from contracts with Iraq signed prior to the first Gulf conflict in 1991. This amount does not include interest, which, it is estimated, could bring the figure to around £1 billion.

These claims stem from more than 500 cases supporting the export of goods ranging from consumer items to heavy industrial equipment. The details of these contracts could be collated only at disproportionate cost.

The Government believe that Iraq's external debt is unsustainable and that creditors will need to agree a substantial reduction through a clear multilateral process in order to restore Iraq to sustainability. This is likely to lead to the writing off of the vast majority of Iraq's external debt.

Fusion Research Reactor

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the answer of 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 814W, on the fusion research reactor, what assessment was made of the proximity of the Cadarache site to an earthquake fault when the United Kingdom gave its backing to the site. [149094]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* In making its decision the UK considered the results of two assessments of the ITER candidate sites, the Joint Assessment of Specific Sites (JASS) in January 2003, and the European ITER Site Study Group (EISSG) in May 2003. Both concluded that Cadarache could meet the requirements for ITER. Safety regulations for the construction of new nuclear facilities in France to meet the risk of earthquakes are very strict. Earthquakes are more frequent and stronger in the vicinity of the Japanese candidate site, Rokkasho.

Business Start-ups

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses, and of what type, have received assistance in starting up from government schemes and initiatives in *(a)* St. Helens, *(b)* Merseyside and *(c)* the North West in each year from 1992. [144321]

Nigel Griffiths: Government support to start-up businesses is delivered primarily through a network of Business Link Operators under contact to the Small Business Service, an agency of the DTI. Numbers of start-up businesses assisted through this network in St. Helens, Merseyside and the North West from April 2001 are as follows:

	St. Helens	*Merseyside*	*North West*
2001–02	4	330	[1]
2002–03	23	667	1,623
2003–04 (To date)	17	579	3,502

[1] Total business start-ups not recorded separately at regional level before April 2002.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what cost savings have been made in her Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151046]

Ms Hewitt: A Centre of Excellence was established within the Department in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition-based programmes and projects. As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings. All Centres of Excellence are currently developing future plans and as part of this process measurement of savings will be defined.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether all Information Technology hardware and software products are being properly utilised in her Department. [151056]

Ms Hewitt: My Department has a range of software products and management policies to ensure that its IT is used in accordance with its intended purpose.

All IT services have an aligned security policy setting out the security measures to counter threats including misuse. Staff are advised of these policies and the checks that are made to ensure compliance. The Department's standard desktop service is owned and managed by our PFI partners and has been designed to prevent the unauthorised addition of products and devices. Auditing of this environment is carried out with a mixture of detection software, active monitoring of security logs and non-intrusive checks of data types, keeping in mind the parameters of data protection legislation and complying with OGC guidelines. Allied to these measures are the best practice guidelines available to all staff and line management.

New services must be procured and implemented in accordance with documented procedures which require business and security approval, with major services being subject to OGC Gateway Review.

Large Hadron Collider

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much the Government have contributed to the funding of the Large Hadron Collider under construction in Switzerland. [152105]

Ms Hewitt: The Government have contributed a total of £361.88 million to CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) project since its commencement in 1995. The contributions have been made in three ways:

(a) Construction of the LHC machine itself via the UK contribution to CERN (£214.57 million)

(b) The UK element of the CERN share of funding for the LHC Detectors (£67.26 million)

(c) UK domestic funding of the LHC Detectors (£80.05 million)

Miners' Compensation

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average length of time was for settlement of miners' compensation claims for respiratory diseases in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside and *(c)* the UK in each year since 1997. [149912]

Nigel Griffiths: The figures are in the following table:

Average time from receipt of claim to settlement (days)

Year claim registered	*Jarrow*	*South Tyneside*	*UK*
1997[1]	2,109	1,953	1,823
1998[1]	1,417	1,454	1,485
1999[1]	1,151	1,163	1,125
2000	836	851	863
2001	634	641	621
2002	432	398	390
2003	-86(1)	136(1)	173

[1] Currently, the average length of time to settle a claim in Jarrow is 86 days. The table sets out the average time from 1997 to 2003.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average length of time was for settlement of miners' compensation claims for respiratory diseases in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each year since 1997. [151287]

Nigel Griffiths: The information is as follows:

Average time from receipt of claim to settlement (days)

Year claim registered	*Lancashire*	*Chorley*
1997[1]	1,921	—
1998[1]	1,448	1,504
1999[1]	1,123	1,104
2000	902	983
2001	598	504
2002[2]	387	505
2003[2]	175	147
2004	5	—

[1] The Department was unable to process any claims until after the signing of the Claims Handling Agreement, agreed with the claimants' solicitors, on 24 September 1999.

[2] Estate claims put on hold as a lower priority, in agreement with claimants' solicitors.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many miners' compensation claims for respiratory diseases *(a)* have been made, *(b)* have been settled and *(c)* are outstanding in (i) Chorley and (ii) Lancashire. [151288]

Nigel Griffiths: The figures are as follows:

Chorley

Year claim registered	*Claim receipts*	*Total settlements including denied/withdrawn (as of 26 January 2004)*	*Number outstanding*
1997[1]	—	—	—
1998[1]	72	46	26
1999	47	32	15
2000	21	12	9
2001	26	10	16
2002[2]	33	3	30
2003[2]	309	5	304
2004	47	—	47
Total	555	108	447

Lancashire

Year claim registered	*Claim receipts*	*Total settlements including denied/withdrawn (as of 26 January 2004)*	*Number outstanding*
1997[1]	14	7	7
1998[1]	1,964	1,308	656
1999[1]	960	581	379
2000	684	381	303
2001	959	400	559
2002[2]	1,293	336	957
2003[2]	7,627	145	7,482
2004	815	4	811
Total	14,316	3,162	11,154

[1] The Department was not able to process claims until after the signing of the Claims Handling Agreement, agreed with the claimants' solicitor on 24 September 1999.

[2] Estate claims put on hold as a lower priority, in agreement with the claimants' solicitors.

Notes:

1. Lancashire consists of the following constituencies: Blackburn; Bolton, North-East; Bolton, South-East; Bolton, West; Burnley; Bury, North; Bury, South; Rossendale and Darwen; Blackpool, North and Fleetwood; Blackpool, South; Hyndburn, Lancaster and Wyre; Morecambe and Lunesdale; Leigh; Makerfield; Worsley; Pendle; Preston; and Ribble Valley.

2. Constituency figures can be found on the DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk/coalhealth. The information is compiled in the middle of the month and shows the figures for the end of the previous month.

3. Claims are dealt with on a priority basis, those from the eldest and sickest living miners and their widows being dealt with first. Claims that are outstanding may be a lower priority or they may have an outstanding policy issue that is preventing settlement of the claim.

National Business Angel Network

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the National Business Angel Network in matching entrepreneurs with private investors. [151433]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* An external evaluation of the National Business Angels Network took place early in 2003 that examined all aspects of its operation, including its matchmaking activities. It was on the basis of the evaluation's findings that the Department decided not to continue funding this element of the National Business Angels Network's operations.

Overseas Investment

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what investment has been made in *(a)* China, *(b)* India, *(c)* Japan and *(d)* South Korea by United Kingdom small and medium-sized enterprises in each year since 2000; [151242]

(2) what investment has been made in *(a)* Pakistan, *(b)* Sri Lanka, *(c)* Brunei and *(d)* Cambodia by United Kingdom small and medium-sized enterprises in each year since 2000; [151243]

(3) what investment has been made in *(a)* Indonesia, *(b)* Laos, *(c)* Macao and *(d)* Malaysia by United Kingdom small and medium-sized enterprises in each year since 2000; [151244]

(4) what investment has been made in *(a)* Philippines, *(b)* Singapore, *(c)* Taiwan, *(d)* Thailand and *(e)* Vietnam by United Kingdom small and medium-sized enterprises in each year since 2000. [151245]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answers 27 January 2004]:* This information is not collected by HMG and there would be a disproportionate cost to obtaining the information.

Pneumoconiosis Benefit

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications for benefit under the Coalworkers Pneumoconiosis Scheme have been received in each of the last six years from claimants from *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales. [151495]

Nigel Griffiths: The information is as follows:

	Number of claims received (UK)
1998	746
1999	809
2000	550
2001	646
2002	1,014
2003	1,767

A geographical breakdown of claims is not kept.

Power Supply (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the security of the power supply in Wales. [151771]

Mr. Timms: The Government attach great importance to maintaining reliable energy supplies—it is one of the four key goals of energy policy identified in our Energy White Paper, published last year.

As the transmission licensee in England and Wales, National Grid Transco (NGT) is under an obligation to operate and maintain an efficient, economic and coordinated electricity system.

In its Winter Outlook, NGT assessed the risks to gas and electricity security of supply for England and Wales during the winter of 2003–04. The report predicted a generating plant margin of just over 16 per cent. for the winter and stated that,

"Under most scenarios network security can be maintained without any interruption of firm gas supplies or electricity demand."

Since the report, more generating plant has been returned from mothballs, and the projected plant margin for England and Wales has increased to just over 20 per cent., a similar level to last year.

To monitor developments in the electricity market in the medium to long term, the Department of Trade and Industry is working, with Ofgem, through the Joint Energy Security of Supply working group (JESS). The latest JESS report was published on 12 November and copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Quality Mark Scheme

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses in the construction industry have joined the Quality Mark scheme; and what action she is taking to promote the scheme. [151127]

Nigel Griffiths: To date 512 firms have joined the Quality Mark Scheme. 702 firms are going through the formal application process. DTI is also working with representative trade bodies and local authority schemes to align membership requirements with Quality Mark. The most recent in a series of launches to the trade was in the north-west in October/November 2003.

Discussions are being held with industry representatives about the best way to promote the benefits of Quality Mark.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* partial and *(b)* full regulatory impact assessments have been undertaken in relation to EU legislation for each year since 1998; and if she will make a statement. [151364]

Nigel Griffiths: Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) are produced for all policy proposals that have a cost to or benefit for business irrespective of the origins of the policy. Copies of full RIAs are placed in the Libraries of the House. Records of the origin of each policy proposal are not held centrally.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the quantification of the costs and benefits of regulations on *(a)* consumers, *(b)* small and medium-sized businesses and *(c)* the Government in the course of regulatory impact assessments. [151365]

Nigel Griffiths: The costs and benefits of a policy proposal are collated in consultation with stakeholders and recorded in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). All RIAs are required to include a small firms impact test to ensure that policy proposals do not have a disproportionate effect on small businesses. The assessments also include a competition assessment to ensure that any policy proposals do not have negative effects on competition. Costs to Government, including enforcement costs, are included in the RIA.

Copies of full RIAs are placed in the Libraries of the House.

Small and Medium-sized Companies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to promote the use of the internet among small and medium-sized companies. [152044]

Mr. Timms: Since 2000, DTI has sought to promote the use of the internet among SMEs through the UK online for business programme. As a result of a decision to restructure business support within DTI, the activities of UK online for business will be integrated into the wider activities of the Department and the Business Link organisation. The decision to restructure has been a direct response to feedback from stakeholders and the aim will be to rationalise the wide range of schemes run by the Department into a small number of coherent and focused products.

The strategy for DTI will be to underline the business benefits that can be achieved through effective use of the internet and other information and communication technologies. Businesses need to become more sophisticated users of the technologies and address issues relating to people and processes as well as the technology itself. DTI will continue to put forward examples of best practice of ICT usage, through websites, publications and events, working closely with industry partners.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she is taking *(a)* to improve access to investment capital and *(b)* to provide other support to small businesses; and if she will make a statement. [150215]

Nigel Griffiths: Since coming to office, the Government have taken a number of steps to improve SMEs' ability to access investment capital. These include the development of Regional Venture Capital Funds, the UK High Technology Fund, Early Growth Funds, The Community Development Venture Fund (known as the Bridges Fund), Community Investment Tax Relief and Investment Readiness demonstration projects. We are currently also developing Enterprise Capital Funds following the 'Bridging the Finance Gap' consultation announced in Budget 2003.

In addition, the changes proposed by the Chancellor in his pre-Budget report to enhance the already effective Venture Capital Trust and Enterprise Investment Scheme tax incentives will further improve the availability of investment capital.

The Government have provided, and continue to provide, a system for practical help and advice to small businesses via Business Link, providing easy access to objective information and support across a wide range of initiatives and financial packages. Business Link provides help and advice for those wishing to start a small business or who are already in a small business. Full details are available on the website (www.businesslink.gov.uk)

Recently, the Government have taken action to support small business via a wide range of initiatives, as outlined in "The Government Action Plan for Small Business" published on 8 January 2004 and available on the Small Business Service website (www.sbs.gov.uk). It provides a comprehensive account of the significant Government help being made available to small businesses.

Small Business Service

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much the Small Business Service has cost in each year since it was established and how many people it employed in each year. [152047]

Nigel Griffiths: The administration cost of the Small Business Service for each year since it was established, is shown in the following table with the people employed each year. These figures are in the Small Business Service published accounts available in the Libraries of the House.

	£000	People (average full time equivalent)	Comment
2000–01	10,195	203	Excluding agency staff and secondments
2001–02	13,420	284	Excluding agency staff and secondments
2001–02	13,420	326	Revised to include agency staff and secondments
2002–03	18,012	440	Includes agency staff and secondments

Notes:

1. We have interpreted the question as being about how much the small business service costs to run (£18 million in 2002–03), rather than the cost of the programmes it delivers (outturn £354 million in 2002–03).

2. The total cost of running the SBS reported in the accounts includes not only the administration budget from DTI (outturn £11.5 million in 2002–03) which covers staff in London and Sheffield, and Directors for the regions, but also the cost of the regional teams, SBS's share of DTI central services and accommodation costs.

3. The leap in administration costs from 2001–02 (£13 million) to 2002–03 (£18 million) is due to the transfer of 94 staff (full-time equivalents) from Government Offices to SBS regional teams, and to a rise in accommodation costs.

Smart Award

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has *(a)* to increase the upper limit of Smart award grants and *(b)* to simplify the Smart application process. [152058]

Nigel Griffiths: The information is as follows.

(a) Following the DTI's review of business support, the Smart scheme has been replaced with a new product from 1 June 2003, Grant for Research and Development, which provides a higher maximum grant for each element than did Smart. The maxima are now £20,000 for a micro project, £75,000 for a research project, £200,000 for a development project and £500,000 for an exceptional development project.

(b) In December 2002 the Smart application form and guidance notes for applicants were simplified so that the number of questions on the form was reduced from 35 to nine. Those modifications have been carried over into the Grant for Research and Development application form. The application procedure is the minimum necessary to protect public funds but is kept under review.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of Smart award-winners have reported increased profitability as a result of their award. [152059]

Nigel Griffiths: The report of the most recent, independent evaluation of the Smart scheme was published in September 2001. Of those award recipients surveyed 51 per cent. indicated that their business had become more profitable as a result of the Smart support received.

Space Research

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether debt accrued by the Beagle 2 programme will be met from existing departmental budget allocations for space programmes and research. [148976]

Ms Hewitt: The Beagle 2 Mars lander was funded by a combination of public and private sector contributions. All funding provided by my Department, directly or by the Particle Physics and Astronomy Council, has been paid as grants. In certain circumstances, some elements of those grants were repayable. Those circumstances have not arisen to date. The Department has no outstanding commitments to the project.

UK Online for Business

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent on the agency UK online for business in each year since its inception. [152050]

Mr. Timms: The following was spent on the DTI programme, UK online for business:

	£ million
2000–01	[1]13.9
2001–02	15.1
2002–03	13.1
2003–04	[2]7

[1] UK online for business was established in September 2000 as a successor programme to the Information Society Initiative. Expenditure in 2000–01 includes the period April-August 2000, when the ISI was still in force.

[2] The figure for 2003–04 includes spend year to date plus forecast spend for remainder of the year.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Clerical Terms of Service

25. **Laura Moffatt:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners, if he will make a statement on the effect of the recent announcements on rights for members of the clergy; and whether the Church Commissioners will have a role in monitoring progress. [151917]

Sir Stuart Bell: I refer to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Chapman) earlier. While the Review in question is being conducted under the auspices of the Archbishops' Council, hon. Members will know that I take a keen interest in this subject and the Church Commissioners will certainly be consulted by the Council as the matter is taken forward.

Church Repairs (VAT)

27. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners, what recent representations he has received on reducing VAT on church repairs. [151919]

Sir Stuart Bell: The hon. Lady will be aware that the broader EU VAT review has currently reached an impasse following the rejection by the Council of Ministers of the proposals brought forward by the Commission last summer. The EU Presidency has now changed and the matter has yet to be formally brought forward for further discussion. The impending elections to the EU Parliament and the likely changes resulting from the appointment of the new Commission later this year may further delay resolution or even consideration of the EU VAT review.

Meanwhile, the Church VAT Group was delighted that the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme has been extended to March 2006. The Group remains in touch with officials at HM Treasury and we know that the Government are committed to achieving the aim of a VAT reduction in this area.

Financial Review

Mr. Key: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners, whether the recommendations of the Church Commissioners' strategic financial review will be developed into spending plans for 2005 to 2007. [151798]

Sir Stuart Bell: The recommendations of the financial review group will be debated by the Church of England's General Synod on 11 February. Spending plans for 2005–07 will be developed by the Archbishops' Council and the Church Commissioners in the light of that debate and consultation with other interested parties, and shared with Synod later in 2004.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

"Minted"

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition of the term minted is used by his Department in *(a)* internal and external documents and *(b)* external advertising. [150610]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The word 'minted' is a slang word. The meaning is imprecise but suggests 'having money'.

This word has been in a recent radio advert which aims to raise awareness about student support available to those considering higher education. It has not been used in any internal or external documents.

Child Deaths

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* cot deaths and *(b)* sudden infant death syndrome deaths were recorded in (i) 2003, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2001, (iv) 2000, (v) 1999, (vi) 1998 and (vii) 1997. [152031]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Mr. Len Cook to Mr. Tim Loughton, dated 2 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question on how many a) cot deaths, and b) 'sudden infant death syndrome' deaths were recorded in (i) 2003, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2001, (iv) 2000, (v) 1999, (vi) 1998 and (vii) 1997. (152031)

In England and Wales the terms 'cot death' and 'Sudden Infant Death Syndrome' are used synonymously in classifying cause of death in babies. In producing figures ONS uses a broad definition of "sudden infant death". This includes any mention of "sudden infant death", "cot death", "crib death", "Sudden Infant Death Syndrome" or some similar term on the death certificate.

The latest available figures are for 2002. Figures since 1997 are given below.

Sudden infant[1] deaths, England and Wales, 1997–2002

	Numbers	Rates[2]
1997	393	0.61
1998	289	0.45
1999	280	0.45
2000	246	0.41
2001	240	0.40
2002[3]	187	0.31

[1] Babies less than one year old.
[2] Rate per 1,000 live births.
[3] Provisional.

Further information is available in two Health Statistics Quarterly articles: 'HSQ 10—Are unascertained deaths the same as sudden infant deaths?' and 'HSQ 19—Sudden infant deaths, 2002', which are available on the national statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=6725.

Children in Care

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children aged *(a)* three to six months and *(b)* six months to one year entered local authority care in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [147911]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information requested is given for children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2002, and for children looked after at 31 March 2002, and is presented in the table.

Children looked after in England aged under 1, year ending 31 March 2002

Age	Number of children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March 2002 (by age on starting)[1]	Number of children looked after at 31 March 2002 (by age on that date)
All aged under 1 year	3,900	2,300
0–3 months	2,600	390
3–6 months	510	600
6 months–1 year	800	1,340

[1] Only the first occasion on which a child started to be looked after in the year has been counted.

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what discussions the Minister for Children has held with the Lord Chancellor on ensuring the provision of Legal Aid to those who may wish to challenge past decisions to take children into care on the basis of previous cases of sudden infant death in their families; [150086]

(2) what steps he is taking to review cases where children have been taken into care on the basis of previous cases of sudden infant death in their families. [150087]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Appeal Court announced its judgment in the case of R *v.* Angela Cannings on 19 January 2004. I am now studying the judgment carefully, in the light of the Attorney-General's statement on 20 January.

Responsibility for the provision of publicly funded legal services is a matter for the Lord Chancellor.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* greater London. [150280]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department occupies in total 33,985 square metres of office space in central London, at Caxton House SW1 and Sanctuary Buildings SW1. We have no other offices in central London.

Criminal Records Bureau

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received on extending the checking procedures of the Criminal Records Bureau to people engaged in observer roles in classrooms and other school activities. [151765]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department has received no representations on this matter.

Employer Training Pilots

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list for Lancashire the firms and companies taking part in employer training pilots; and how much public funding they have been given. [151276]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Pilots are currently running in 12 LSC areas: Birmingham and Solihull, Derbyshire, Essex, Greater Manchester, Tyne and Wear, Wiltshire and Swindon, Berkshire, East London, Kent, Leicester, Shropshire, and South Yorkshire.

Therefore there is not currently a pilot running in Lancashire. In the pre-Budget report statement, the Chancellor announced the extension of the Employer Training Pilots for a third year. Officials are currently working to develop guidelines for selecting pilots to be launched in September.

Education Maintenance Allowances (Liverpool)

Mrs. Eliman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of education maintenance allowances in improving staying-on rates in Liverpool. [150152]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The independent evaluation of EMA began in September 1999 and assesses the impact of EMA among EMA-eligible young people in 10 of the first 15 pilot areas compared to 11 control areas. This evaluation estimated the impact nationally will be around 4.1 percentage points among the full cohort of young people.

Liverpool LEA began piloting EMA in September 2000 and is not formally part of the statistical evaluation. Therefore we do not have statistically reliable information on the exact impact of EMA in Liverpool. We do, however, collect information to assess participation by 16 and 17 year olds by LEA area. This data, which is available on the DfES website and includes information on the numbers of young people accepted for EMA, is replicated in the following table. Although we cannot say that EMA is the only factor causing the increase in participation, it must be a significant contributor to this effect.

	Liverpool				
Age	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Participation in education (percentage of age group)					
16	63	64	66	—	—
17	48	48	48	—	—
Combined	55	56	57	—	—

	Number of students in further education colleges by LEA of student residency
1997–98	29,394
1998–99	31,075
1999–2000	30,161
2000–01	31,668
2001–02	35,059

	Young people accepted for education maintenance allowance (EMA)
2000–01	3,300
2001–02	3,900

Further and Higher Education

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to ask the Higher Education Funding Council for England to increase directly funded higher education provision in further education colleges; and if he will make a statement. [151498]

Alan Johnson: I have no plans to ask the Higher Education Funding Council for England to increase directly funded higher education provision in further education colleges. As we said in the White Paper, "The Future of Higher Education", it is important that higher education provision in further education colleges is of the high quality we expect from higher education. We believe that structured partnerships between colleges and universities—franchise or consortium arrangements with colleges funded through partner higher education institutions—will be the primary vehicle to meet these aims and deliver the best benefits for learners.

There are some instances of niche provision where direct funding of higher education in further education colleges is more appropriate and this will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Common Inspection Framework will take account of higher education provision in further education colleges; and if he will make a statement. [151500]

Alan Johnson: The Common Inspection Framework does not cover higher education provision in further education colleges and there are no plans for it to do so. The quality of higher education provided through further education colleges is subject to review by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) acting on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, which has a statutory responsibility to assure the quality of provision it funds. The QAA assesses quality at subject level in further education colleges under the 'Academic Review' element of its quality assurance regime.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with the *(a)* Quality Assurance Agency and *(b)* Higher Education Funding Council for England regarding successor arrangements to Academic Review for directly funded higher education which is provided by further education colleges. [151501]

Alan Johnson: None at present. I am aware that HEFCE and QAA are currently considering the successor arrangements after the current round has been completed, and are committed to introducing a revised system.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what new research he is planning to ascertain the scale and scope of higher education delivered by further education colleges; and if he will make a statement. [151502]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not currently have any plans for further research into the scale and scope of higher education delivered by further education providers. The Department, HEFCE and the LSC already have information relating to the amount and type of higher education delivered in further education colleges.

The Government want to expand higher education, including through work-focused Foundation Degrees. Our expectation is that many new Foundation Degrees will be delivered by colleges working with higher education institutions. HEFCE recently invited further education colleges and higher education institutions to bid for additional student numbers and they will be announcing the outcome this spring.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to establish teacher training qualifications for higher education teaching in further education colleges; and if he will make a statement. [151503]

Alan Johnson: The White Paper, "The Future of Higher Education", published in January 2003, set out our expectation that professional teaching standards and mandatory qualifications for new higher education (HE) teachers should be established. These are due to be introduced by 2006 and will be applicable to those teaching HE in further education colleges. They will complement the regulations already in place for FE teachers.

Higher National Diplomas/Foundation Degrees

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has for the retention of Higher National Diplomas; and if he will make a statement. [151499]

Alan Johnson: It is our expectation that in due course the Foundation Degree will replace the Higher National Diploma. Higher National Diplomas have served employers well in the past and while employer loyalty exists in some sectors, the numbers applying for these courses are in decline.

Edexcel, who award the BTEC Higher National Diploma, have announced plans to make BTEC Foundation Degrees available. Colleges and universities currently offering HNDs will make decisions about whether they retain their HND provision, develop their own Foundation Degrees, or move to new BTEC Foundation Degrees. In doing so, they will take account of student and employer demand.

Lottery Revenue

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total value is of lottery revenue used to support Government-sponsored projects within his Department since 1997. [149626]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* My Department has no policy or operational responsibility for distribution of National Lottery proceeds. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 26 January 2004 by my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts.

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148019]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the expenditure in the last five financial years on management consultancy in the Department for Education and Skills and its predecessor, the Department for Education and Employment, (including the Sure Start Unit and the then Children and Young People's Unit).

Expenditure on management consultancy

	£ million
1998–99	5.0
1999–2000	3.7
2000–01	4.3
2001–02	5.0
2002–03	4.0

These figures are for consultancy falling within the Department's administrative cost limit and exclude programme consultancy costs, which are currently not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Modern Apprenticeships

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much his Department has spent on Modern Apprenticeships in each year since their inception. [150004]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Modern Apprenticeships (MA), in England are funded through the work based learning for young people budget of the Learning and Skills Council. This budget covers Advanced MAs, Foundation MAs, NVQ Learning and Entry to Employment. The LSC estimate that of the £673 million budget for Work Based Learning £467 million was spent on MAs in 2001–02. In 2002–03 the LSC's budget for WBL was £828 million of which it is estimated that £539 million was spent on MAs. The LSC's budget for WBL for 2003–04 is £791 million. Before April 2001 MAs were funded by the Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC). Disaggregated data showing the amount of funding spent on MAs from their work based learning for young people budget in this period is not available.

NVQs

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the percentage of the population of London who have National Vocational Qualifications at level *(a)* 1, *(b)* 2 and *(c)* 3. [151071]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The percentages of the working age[1] population in London who have National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 1, 2 or 3 are presented in table 1 as follows:

[1] Working age is defined as males aged 16–64 and females aged 16–59.

Table 1: Highest level of NVQ held by people of working age, London and England, autumn 2003

	England		London	
Level	*Thousand*	*Percentage*	*Thousand*	*Percentage*
Level 1	438	1.4	53	1.1
Level 2	1,274	4.1	117	2.4
Level 3	973	3.1	67	1.3
Level 4	181	0.6	18	0.4
Level 5	45	0.1	[1]—	[1]—
Level unknown	389	1.2	36	0.7
Total	3,301	10.5	294	5.9
Working age population	31,296		4,971	

[1] Sample size too small for reliable estimate.

Source:
Labour Force Survey, Autumn 2003.

School Absenteeism

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in England and Wales missed at least one half day session of school in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* 2002–03 in each local education authority. [150148]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: The information requested is shown in the following table for local education authorities in England.

The average number of sessions missed per absent pupil due to authorised and unauthorised absence has also been provided together with the attendance rate in percentage terms.

Absence information for schools in Wales can be obtained from the National Assembly for Wales.

Public absence in maintained primary and secondary schools in England, 1997/98 and 2002/03

	Academic year 1997/98				
	Authorised absence		*Unauthorised absence*		
	Number of pupils that missed a session	*Average number sessions missed*	*Number of pupils that missed a session*	*Average number sessions missed*	*Attendance rate (%)*
Barking and Dagenham	21,291	24	6,665	16	91.3
Barnet	35,677	21	5,409	14	93.1
Barnsley	27,900	23	7,372	15	91.5
Bath and North East Somerset	20,039	19	2,273	11	93.8
Bedfordshire	47,755	20	5,261	11	93.4
Bexley	30,184	22	3,597	11	92.6
Birmingham	141,422	25	35,831	15	90.9
Blackburn with Darwen	21,215	24	4,482	15	91.6
Blackpool	17,197	24	3,867	16	91.5
Bolton	36,805	22	5,356	21	92.5
Bournemouth	17,773	22	4,090	11	91.9
Bracknell Forest	11,839	18	1,490	9	94.1
Bradford	66,183	22	21,422	17	91.6
Brent	24,425	21	4,963	13	92.9
Brighton and Hove	22,624	22	4,711	13	92.1
Bristol, City of	40,468	23	10,219	15	91.3
Bromley	35,062	20	5,136	11	93.3
Buckinghamshire	56,038	19	4,807	11	94.1
Bury	22,806	21	3,036	13	93.4
Calderdale	27,386	22	3,653	13	92.9
Cambridgeshire	59,249	20	9,576	11	93.4
Camden	16,357	25	4,609	17	91.1
Cheshire	82,786	19	10,479	13	93.9
Cornwall	60,822	21	8,016	9	92.9
Coventry	40,387	24	6,167	16	91.9

Public absence in maintained primary and secondary schools in England, 1997/98 and 2002/03

	Academic year 1997/98				
	Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence		
	Number of pupils that missed a session	Average number sessions missed	Number of pupils that missed a session	Average number sessions missed	Attendance rate (%)
Croydon	36,245	24	5,808	12	92.3
Cumbria	60,232	22	4,358	15	93.2
Darlington	12,504	24	1,416	23	91.8
Derby City	28,722	21	6,323	12	92.6
Derbyshire	87,758	19	13,312	14	93.4
Devon	78,240	20	12,721	9	93.1
Doncaster	39,941	26	7,369	20	91.0
Dorset	44,416	22	6,714	8	93.2
Dudley	38,047	21	3,894	12	93.0
Durham	62,196	25	6,477	23	91.5
Ealing	31,241	22	6,504	14	92.2
East Riding of Yorkshire	38,688	20	5,697	12	93.2
East Sussex	50,293	20	9,412	13	92.9
Enfield	35,406	21	8,772	13	92.6
Essex	159,335	21	24,169	12	93.0
Gateshead	22,551	24	3,420	22	92.1
Gloucestershire	68,726	20	7,319	9	93.5
Greenwich	26,837	23	10,456	17	90.8
Hackney	20,116	24	6,583	16	91.2
Halton	17,808	22	3,536	15	92.4
Hammersmith and Fulham	11,207	24	3,685	20	90.9
Hampshire	142,310	19	21,598	11	93.7
Haringey	21,936	23	8,124	16	91.8
Harrow	24,390	25	3,778	11	92.5
Hartlepool	12,229	22	2,316	23	92.0
Havering	29,254	20	3,522	11	93.3
Herefordshire	19,847	20	1,727	14	93.4
Hertfordshire	125,895	19	15,697	11	93.9
Hillingdon	28,936	22	7,764	13	92.2
Hounslow	27,188	24	6,299	12	91.3
Isle of Wight	15,845	24	2,108	10	91.9
Isles of Scilly	221	21	9	13	92.7
Islington	18,402	23	6,366	17	91.5
Kensington and Chelsea	7,832	21	2,551	17	91.5
Kent	161,121	21	20,573	12	93.0
Kingston upon Hull, City of	36,197	28	11,099	20	89.0
Kingston upon Thames	15,115	20	1,709	14	93.0
Kirklees	51,449	20	12,343	14	92.9
Knowsley	22,664	25	5,876	20	90.7
Lambeth	20,675	24	7,715	12	91.4
Lancashire	144,388	21	18,210	14	93.3
Leeds	87,620	23	18,733	18	91.9
Leicester City	37,981	25	8,904	16	91.2
Leicestershire	77,014	21	8,452	17	93.3
Lewisham	24,291	22	9,524	16	91.3
Lincolnshire	74,147	19	9,203	15	93.5
Liverpool	58,721	28	13,326	20	90.3
London, City of	131	10	85	11	95.6
Luton	24,982	21	6,076	10	92.8
Manchester	55,120	30	15,385	20	88.9
Medway	35,930	21	6,330	11	92.7
Merton	17,698	23	5,312	15	91.7
Middlesbrough	19,390	26	4,041	15	91.0
Milton Keynes	27,790	23	3,258	13	92.1
Newbury	19,029	22	1,697	14	91.1
Newcastle upon Tyne	30,171	27	5,248	18	90.9
Newham	35,427	21	19,203	15	92.7
Norfolk	88,667	21	12,707	13	91.6
North East Lincolnshire	23,776	23	3,325	25	92.9
North Lincolnshire	20,161	21	3,075	15	93.5
North Somerset	21,883	19	2,490	17	93.0
North Tyneside	24,011	21	1,582	23	94.1
North Yorkshire	65,408	18	5,049	12	93.1
Northamptonshire	79,026	21	13,657	12	93.4
Northumberland	38,235	21	2,872	17	90.2
Nottingham City	32,818	26	11,802	20	92.8
Nottinghamshire	93,785	20	15,729	17	91.6
Oldham	33,330	25	7,473	17	93.0
Oxfordshire	67,119	20	13,318	13	92.1
Peterborough City	23,068	23	4,879	12	93.1
Plymouth	32,983	20	5,942	10	92.5

Public absence in maintained primary and secondary schools in England, 1997/98 and 2002/03

Academic year 1997/98

	Authorised absence		*Unauthorised absence*		
	Number of pupils that missed a session	*Average number sessions missed*	*Number of pupils that missed a session*	*Average number sessions missed*	*Attendance rate (%)*
Poole	15,127	22	3,135	9	91.1
Portsmouth	21,952	25	5,228	16	92.8
Reading	13,836	20	3,806	14	92.9
Redbridge	30,052	21	6,083	10	91.9
Redcar and Cleveland	20,093	24	2,035	22	93.8
Richmond upon Thames	16,702	21	1,505	18	91.7
Rochdale	25,822	25	5,595	18	91.9
Rotherham	35,586	23	6,582	18	93.7
Rutland	3,997	20	373	14	90.7
Salford	27,039	27	5,601	18	90.9
Sandwell	40,438	26	8,130	16	92.7
Sefton	38,173	22	4,476	12	91.3
Sheffield	58,674	24	16,740	18	93.7
Shropshire	33,566	18	4,625	9	92.6
Slough	13,462	22	3,103	11	93.1
Solihull	29,547	21	2,553	13	93.4
Somerset	57,371	20	6,294	11	93.5
South Gloucestershire	30,396	19	5,258	10	92.5
South Tyneside	20,419	24	1,137	12	92.2
Southampton	26,104	22	6,301	13	92.5
Southend-on-Sea	19,532	21	4,157	15	91.6
Southwark	23,725	23	9,502	18	92.6
St Helens	23,287	23	2,484	10	93.5
Staffordshire	103,311	20	10,580	11	93.2
Stockport	34,554	20	6,561	13	92.6
Stockton on Tees	26,885	22	1,646	22	91.9
Stoke on Trent	31,563	23	5,218	14	93.8
Suffolk	77,371	19	7,336	12	92.2
Sunderland	40,658	24	5,092	16	93.4
Surrey	106,334	20	9,540	11	93.5
Sutton	21,589	20	2,815	10	92.4
Swindon	24,252	23	4,897	10	92.1
Tameside	30,435	24	4,152	17	92.2
The Wrekin	21,919	22	3,932	12	91.8
Thurrock	18,058	23	3,729	16	92.0
Torbay	15,254	23	2,240	9	91.0
Tower Hamlets	25,759	22	13,707	14	92.9
Trafford	28,119	22	2,941	16	92.5
Wakefield	42,261	22	9,319	11	91.4
Walsall	36,899	25	8,141	13	91.6
Waltham Forest	27,576	22	8,338	15	92.0
Wandsworth	19,906	24	4,474	15	93.8
Warrington	25,740	20	2,407	14	93.2
Warwickshire	61,503	21	6,146	14	94.1
West Sussex	83,925	18	9,807	11	93.2
Westminster, City of	13,219	21	4,620	10	90.3
Wigan	41,916	26	5,313	20	92.5
Wiltshire	51,372	24	6,698	20	93.8
Windsor & Maidenhead	14,961	19	1,699	10	93.7
Wirral	42,125	20	4,901	11	92.3
Wokingham	18,953	23	2,345	18	94.4
Wolverhampton	31,133	17	7,312	9	90.8
Worcestershire	64,153	26	8,501	15	93.0
York, City of	17,644	21	1,946	14	94.0
Total	5,974,052	18	1,029,549	14	92.6

Academic year 2002-03

	Authorised absence		*Unauthorised absence*		
	Number of pupils that missed a session	*Average number sessions missed*	*Number of pupils that missed a session*	*Average number sessions missed*	*Attendance rate (%)*
Barking and Dagenham	23,161	20	10,116	12	92.1
Barnet	36,343	19	7,642	12	93.5
Barnsley	29,266	22	8,556	11	92.1
Bath and North East Somerset	20,332	19	3,838	10	93.4
Bedfordshire	51,651	19	6,578	8	93.6
Bexley	31,442	21	4,911	11	93.0
Birmingham	140,769	21	39,297	12	92.4

	Academic year 2002–03				
	Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence		
	Number of pupils that missed a session	Average number sessions missed	Number of pupils that missed a session	Average number sessions missed	Attendance rate (%)
Blackburn with Darwen	21,379	22	3,973	14	92.6
Blackpool	17,452	22	4,028	13	92.0
Bolton	36,109	20	5,860	15	93.4
Bournemouth	17,480	20	2,928	7	93.4
Bracknell Forest	12,382	18	1,972	9	93.8
Bradford	64,625	19	25,293	12	92.6
Brent	28,999	21	5,741	10	92.9
Brighton and Hove	25,231	22	6,224	12	92.2
Bristol, City of	39,959	23	11,886	15	91.3
Bromley	37,486	20	7,482	12	93.1
Buckinghamshire	58,283	17	6,847	12	94.3
Bury	24,429	19	3,860	10	93.8
Calderdale	27,343	20	4,974	9	93.6
Cambridgeshire	65,190	19	11,320	10	93.3
Camden	15,632	23	4,629	12	91.5
Cheshire	84,589	18	13,295	13	93.9
Cornwall	62,898	21	9,994	8	92.8
Coventry	38,885	23	5,451	13	92.3
Croydon	39,205	22	10,189	11	92.4
Cumbria	62,095	19	9,001	11	93.8
Darlington	12,296	23	1,316	18	92.3
Derby City	30,258	21	6,842	13	92.7
Derbyshire	93,928	20	19,086	11	93.4
Devon	82,585	20	15,437	10	93.1
Doncaster	40,130	22	8,991	13	92.3
Dorset	46,206	19	6,192	9	93.5
Dudley	42,356	21	6,856	12	92.8
Durham	62,598	22	6,211	12	92.8
Ealing	31,320	20	4,445	11	93.1
East Riding of Yorkshire	41,856	20	5,750	10	93.5
East Sussex	56,132	19	14,364	10	93.1
Enfield	37,968	20	13,889	12	92.4
Essex	167,654	20	27,392	11	93.1
Gateshead	22,882	21	2,925	15	93.1
Gloucestershire	70,961	19	7,520	11	93.7
Greenwich	26,943	21	11,100	15	91.7
Hackney	19,410	21	7,055	15	92.1
Halton	16,628	21	3,717	19	92.2
Hammersmith and Fulham	12,722	21	3,002	16	92.1
Hampshire	150,092	18	27,073	12	93.8
Haringey	26,570	20	12,017	12	91.8
Harrow	24,991	20	2,800	9	93.4
Hartlepool	12,657	19	3,196	16	93.2
Havering	31,577	20	3,738	10	93.0
Herefordshire	20,743	19	2,835	11	93.7
Hertfordshire	134,247	19	20,499	11	93.7
Hillingdon	32,489	21	9,099	12	92.4
Hounslow	26,953	19	7,856	12	92.9
Isle of Wight	16,398	22	2,147	14	92.4
Isles of Scilly	214	17	79	6	93.5
Islington	19,050	21	7,527	11	92.0
Kensington and Chelsea	8,202	19	2,395	10	93.1
Kent	171,884	20	23,907	12	93.3
Kingston upon Hull, City of	34,655	23	9,433	17	91.2
Kingston upon Thames	15,906	19	1,679	10	93.7
Kirklees	52,205	19	10,747	12	93.4
Knowsley	21,427	23	5,657	20	91.5
Lambeth	21,618	19	7,033	9	93.1
Lancashire	146,327	20	19,805	13	93.5
Leeds	89,166	21	21,540	15	92.5
Leicester City	38,771	21	12,139	16	92.0
Leicestershire	80,182	19	12,594	14	93.6
Lewisham	26,789	19	10,890	12	92.6
Lincolnshire	82,913	19	12,184	11	93.6
Liverpool	57,430	24	12,316	16	91.7
London, City of	170	17	0	0	94.7
Luton	27,104	22	5,605	10	92.5
Manchester	52,019	24	12,829	16	91.4
Medway	36,808	21	6,359	10	93.0

	Academic year 2002–03				
	Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence		
	Number of pupils that missed a session	Average number sessions missed	Number of pupils that missed a session	Average number sessions missed	Attendance rate (%)
Merton	16,915	21	3,935	11	92.8
Middlesbrough	18,585	24	3,872	11	91.9
Milton Keynes	28,668	21	4,396	9	93.2
Newbury	19,399	24	2,981	17	91.9
Newcastle upon Tyne	29,416	17	4,942	9	93.6
Newham	35,746	21	16,931	11	92.7
Norfolk	95,378	22	19,621	14	92.2
North East Lincolnshire	23,120	21	4,891	10	93.1
North Lincolnshire	20,887	20	3,815	15	93.2
North Somerset	22,949	20	3,503	16	93.5
North Tyneside	23,607	18	2,408	10	94.0
North Yorkshire	72,758	20	8,109	11	93.0
Northamptonshire	86,330	21	17,324	13	93.2
Northumberland	38,763	22	2,793	16	91.8
Nottingham City	31,294	20	8,503	15	92.9
Nottinghamshire	96,572	21	19,248	13	92.6
Oldham	32,869	18	7,737	10	93.7
Oxfordshire	69,733	21	14,085	11	93.0
Peterborough City	23,508	21	4,907	10	92.9
Plymouth	32,297	18	4,266	10	93.5
Poole	15,953	20	3,448	12	92.4
Portsmouth	21,949	20	6,025	15	92.7
Reading	13,228	18	2,768	10	93.6
Redbridge	32,332	21	8,007	13	93.0
Redcar and Cleveland	19,775	18	2,992	16	93.4
Richmond upon Thames	16,657	21	3,569	13	92.7
Rochdale	28,286	21	7,157	14	92.7
Rotherham	36,857	17	7,338	13	94.4
Rutland	4,346	22	345	14	91.8
Salford	28,092	24	7,358	15	91.3
Sandwell	40,336	20	7,937	12	93.3
Sefton	36,540	21	4,255	15	92.3
Sheffield	61,795	19	16,686	7	93.8
Shropshire	35,004	19	4,247	13	92.9
Slough	15,684	18	3,999	12	93.7
Solihull	29,841	19	4,244	11	93.3
Somerset	61,448	19	7,924	9	93.4
South Gloucestershire	33,294	22	7,974	10	92.8
South Tyneside	19,548	22	2,412	14	92.1
Southampton	25,571	20	5,030	15	92.8
Southend-on-Sea	21,153	18	4,216	12	92.7
Southwark	26,935	22	13,369	18	93.0
St Helens	22,410	19	2,950	10	93.6
Staffordshire	105,022	19	15,492	10	93.7
Stockport	35,473	21	6,084	15	93.3
Stockton on Tees	25,194	20	2,467	14	92.7
Stoke on Trent	29,934	19	7,397	13	93.5
Suffolk	81,873	23	14,165	15	92.6
Sunderland	38,199	18	4,447	11	93.6
Surrey	111,866	18	18,997	10	93.8
Sutton	23,679	19	3,532	11	93.8
Swindon	24,412	22	3,022	9	93.1
Tameside	30,755	21	4,549	9	93.1
The Wrekin	22,289	20	3,067	13	92.4
Thurrock	19,554	20	4,465	10	92.9
Torbay	15,746	18	4,196	9	92.7
Tower Hamlets	28,361	18	14,674	12	94.3
Trafford	27,769	21	2,940	11	92.9
Wakefield	42,799	23	9,397	11	92.2
Walsall	38,143	20	7,503	12	93.0
Waltham Forest	27,687	22	6,816	10	92.8
Wandsworth	20,154	18	5,153	10	94.1
Warrington	25,992	19	4,256	12	93.6
Warwickshire	62,174	19	7,632	10	93.7
West Sussex	89,031	19	12,737	10	93.4
Westminster, City of	14,724	19	5,338	10	92.9
Wigan	41,821	21	4,535	13	93.3
Wiltshire	54,251	19	7,933	9	93.7
Windsor & Maidenhead	15,319	18	3,431	8	93.9

	Academic year 2002–03				
	Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence		
	Number of pupils that missed a session	Average number sessions missed	Number of pupils that missed a session	Average number sessions missed	Attendance rate (%)
Wirral	42,322	20	4,600	14	93.4
Wokingham	19,181	18	2,451	10	94.0
Wolverhampton	31,702	22	5,819	14	92.3
Worcestershire	65,012	20	8,738	12	93.4
York, City of	19,800	19	4,030	12	93.6
Total	6,183,071	20	1,196,333	12	93.1

Notes:
1. Figures relate to maintained primary and secondary schools but exclude maintained special schools and CTCs.
2. Figures cover pupils that were absent between September 1997 and May 1998, and September 2002 and May 2003.

School Buses

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many serious accidents have occurred on school bus journeys in England in the last five years as a consequence of the behaviour of pupils travelling unsupervised on the bus. [151864]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* Road accident statistics are a matter for the Department for Transport. Their road accident statistics do not record whether bus accidents affecting children occur on school buses or public service buses, or record the causes of accidents.

School Meals and Trips

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in Essex were provided by the county council with school meals in each year from 1990 to 2003. [150909]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is not available centrally.

The Department collects information on free school meals as part of the annual schools' Census, but not the total number of all (that is, free and paid for) school meals.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had on introducing charitable status for the provision of *(a)* school meals and *(b)* school trips. [151275]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department has not had any discussions about introducing charitable status for the provision of school meals or school trips.

Training and Enterprise Council

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will place the audited statutory accounts for Training and Enterprise Council in England for financial year ending 25 March 2001 in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [151858]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I have made arrangements for copies of the audited statutory accounts for the 72 TECs in England to be placed in the Library.

Undergraduates (Bankruptcy)

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate students in England have declared themselves bankrupt in each year since 1992; and if he will make a statement. [151713]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The following table shows the number of student loan borrowers, both graduates and undergraduates, who have had bankruptcy orders made against them since 1992. There are no figures showing undergraduates as a separate group.

Bankrupt year[1]	Number of borrowers[2,3,4,5]
1992	8
1993	13
1994	22
1995	40
1996	49
1997	77
1998	97
1999	142
2000	153
2001	249
2002	276
2003	[6]899
Total	2,025

[1] Calendar year in which the borrower became bankrupt.
[2] Data show the number of student loan borrowers.
[3] Includes borrowers who may or may not have graduated from their course.
[4] Includes all types of students (including PGCE—Postgraduate Certificate of Education students).
[5] Data cover both types of student loan—Mortgage Style (including loans sold to the private sector) and Income Contingent.
[6] The increase in the numbers of bankruptcies in 2003 seems to be as a result of greater public awareness that students loans are provable in bankruptcy.
Source:
Student Loans Company.

University of Lincolnshire and Humberside

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* reports he has received and *(b)* action he has taken in response to the termination of the University of Humberside enrolment programme in July 1999. [152194]

Alan Johnson: I assume my hon. Friend is referring to the actions taken in July 1999 by the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside to terminate its recruitment to franchised courses in Israel. I have

received no report or taken any action. However, I understand that the University (now entitled the University of Lincoln) has been cooperating with the relevant authorities in Israel and is keeping the Higher Education Funding Council for England informed of any developments.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many branches of the University of Humberside have been established since its franchise operation was first introduced; and in which countries. [152197]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not maintain lists of the overseas franchise arrangements of UK universities. However, I am aware that that the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside (now renamed University of Lincoln) ceased recruitment to all of its overseas franchise operations in 2000.

University Overseas Franchises

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which universities have established overseas franchise operations; and which overseas universities, colleges and other bodies have agreed to facilitate these partnerships. [152198]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not maintain lists of the overseas franchise arrangements of UK universities. However, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) carries out audits which cover the arrangements by which an awarding institution secures the standards of its awards and the effectiveness of its quality management arrangements for partnership links both within and outside the UK. Since 1996 it has audited 109 overseas collaborative links involving 64 HEIs in 24 countries.

Working Skills

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to reduce the number of people in the working age population in the West Midlands with no qualifications. [149831]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* We are committed to raising the skill levels of adults in the workforce, and in particular, supporting adults with no, or low qualifications to gain qualifications that give them the foundation skills for employability.

The Skills Strategy White Paper, "21st Century Skills Realising Our Potential", published in July last year, set out a number of key measures to address this issue. And we have already put in place support for adults with basic skill needs through our Skills for Life Strategy.

The White Paper announced the introduction of a new entitlement to free learning for all those studying for their first full level 2 qualification as foundation for employability. We have begun to pilot the introduction of a new adult learning grant of up to £30 a week for full time learners studying for their first NVQ Level 2 qualification or equivalent.

We have also put in place a strategy to ensure that low-skilled adults receive high quality information, advice and guidance to help them choose the right course for them.

We are running 12 Employer Training Pilots, of which two are in the West Midlands, to encourage employers to invest in skills and qualifications, particularly for low skilled trainees. They are testing out a package of financial support measures to improve access to training and enable employees to develop basic skills and NVQ level 2 qualifications.

In the West Midlands, six professional development centres have been established as a result of partnerships between the local LSCs and the Universities of Wolverhampton, Warwick, Worcestershire and Staffordshire. These are aimed at providing support and opportunities for all those working across the spectrum of Skills for Life delivery—teachers, voluntary sector workers and those working in Adult and Community Learning.

We are working nationally to engage employers in activity to address the basic skills needs of their employees. This includes raising demand in the workplace and ensuring that appropriate advice and guidance is available to employers to help them establish the learning programmes they require for their employees. In the West Midlands, we have established a group of employer champions who will push the message that basic skills are important to other employers.

Advantage West Midlands has responded to our invitation to RDAs and their regional partners to draw up proposals for Regional Skills Partnerships. The Partnerships aim to ensure that the work of different agencies involved in delivering the aims of the Skills Strategy—the Learning and Skills Councils, Jobcentre Plus, the Skills for Business network, the Small Business Service and others—are better co-ordinated and delivered in a way that connects with the needs of employers at individual and regional, local and sectoral levels. We will be talking to Advantage West Midlands about their proposal and their plans to set up the Partnership in the West Midlands in April 2004.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Voting Age

20. **Bob Spink:** To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, how the outcome of the review on lowering the age of voting will be communicated to the House. [151912]

Mr. Viggers: On the day of publication of its report on the age of voting and of candidacy, the Electoral Commission will send a copy to each Member of Parliament and will place copies in the Library.

Local Government Finance

26. **Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what assessment is made of the effect on grant allocations and inward investment consequent on levels of deprivation in local authority wards when boundary reviews are being carried out; and if he will make a statement. [151918]

Mr. Viggers: None. While a number of agencies use local authority ward boundaries as a convenient basis for the allocation of grant aid and regeneration funding, such considerations do not fall within the scope of the matters which are taken into account in carrying out boundary reviews.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burundi

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to ensure that the Government of Burundi does not offer an amnesty for crimes against humanity committed against British and other nationals during the civil war; and if he will make a statement. [151767]

Mr. Mullin: The violation of human rights and international humanitarian law in Burundi continues to be of serious concern. While we cannot dictate the terms of any eventual ceasefire between the parties to the conflict in Burundi, we are working closely with the international community on the issue of post-conflict justice in Burundi and how best to bring an end to impunity.

In this respect, we support the proposal of the United Nations to send an assessment mission to Burundi, which is to consider the advisability and feasibility of establishing an international commission of judicial inquiry for Burundi.

In respect of crimes committed against British nationals, we continue to raise individual cases with the Burundi authorities.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter to him dated 17 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. Ahmed. [151226]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 20 January.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to S. Rahman. [151228]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 12 January.

Council of Europe

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution was made by the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe in 2003–04. [151795]

Mr. MacShane: In 2003, the UK's contributions to the Council of Europe totalled €27,023,466. This breaks down into 10 strands:

Contributions made by the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe in 2003

Budget	*Government Department*	€ *Amount*
Ordinary budget	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	21,918,076
Pensions	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	2,197,145
Extraordinary budget (buildings)	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	501,787
European Youth Foundation	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	311,238
Venice Commission	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	405,318
Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field	Department of Health	287,889
European Pharmacopoeia	Department of Health	691,424
Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group)	Home Office	241,215
Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Group of States against Corruption	Home Office	235,775
Graz Centre	Department for Education and Skills	233,600

In 2004 the UK's contributions to the Council of Europe will total €28,356,459. This breaks down into 10 strands:

Contributions to be made by the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe in 2004

Budget	*Government Department*	€ *Amount*
Ordinary budget	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	22,376,585
Pensions	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	3,060,401
Extraordinary budget (buildings)	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	497,665
European Youth Foundation	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	337,136
Venice Commission	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	375,414
Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field	Department of Health	259,132
European Pharmacopoeia	Department of Health	681,760
Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group)	Home Office	249,773
Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Group of States against Corruption	Home Office	287,213
Graz Centre	Department for Education and Skills	231,381

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved were in each of the categories listed. [151460]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As far as the Department is aware no staff in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have been investigated, suspended or dismissed for benefit fraud in the last six years. Under Diplomatic and Home Service Regulations, all staff are obliged to tell the Department if they are charged with any criminal offence. According to departmental records, none have been prosecuted or convicted for benefit fraud in the last six years.

Mr. Craig Alden

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the detention of Mr. Craig Alden in Brazil. [151724]

Mr. Mullin: Staff at our Embassy in Brasilia closely monitor developments in Mr. Alden's case and provide him with all the consular assistance they properly can. We have raised our interest in his case with the Brazilian authorities on a number of occasions, including when my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met the Brazilian Foreign Minister in July 2003. Consular staff at our Embassy also raise any welfare aspects of the case with the local authorities, most recently with the new Federal Director of Prisons in November 2003.

Under international law we cannot interfere in the judicial processes of another country. Mr Alden's lawyers continue to pursue his case through legal channels and keep our consular staff updated of developments. We understand his lawyers have decided to submit a second habeas corpus application. As the legal case proceeds we will continue to offer the appropriate consular assistance to Craig and his family.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government have taken to promote use of the World Service in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. [151884]

Mr. Rammell: The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) jams radio broadcasts from outside the country. Short wave would be the main frequency for BBC World Service, but short wave radios are illegal in DPRK. We urge DPRK to remove the restrictions on access to information and freedom of expression by its people.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking in bilateral talks with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to further the protection of human rights there. [151885]

Mr. Rammell: We are concerned about reports of serious human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The lack of access for independent monitors makes it difficult to verify these reports. We raise human rights issues regularly with the DPRK authorities via our embassy in Pyongyang and the DPRK embassy in London. We also encourage DPRK to comply with the recommendations set out in the resolution adopted at last year's UN Commission on Human Rights. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) sponsored two DPRK officials to attend a human rights training course at Essex University in 2002, and proposed a visit by the Head of the FCO's Human Rights Policy Department in 2003. The latter has yet to be granted.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking within the *(a)* EU and *(b)* UN to further the protection of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. [151886]

Mr. Rammell: The EU has been closely monitoring the human rights situation in North Korea, and having seen little evidence of improvement in recent years, tabled a resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) in 2003. The resolution expressed concern at reports of serious and continued human rights violations in North Korea, and called on DPRK to co-operate with the UN human rights machinery. The resolution was adopted by the largest majority of any country-specific resolution.

Energy Efficiency Programmes

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* green and *(b)* energy efficiency programmes are pursued by his Department in (i) the UK and (ii) missions abroad. [149199]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 22 January 2004]*: The FCO has established Environmental Management Systems (EMS) across most of its UK estate. The system covering our London Offices has been certified to ISO 14001 and covers 75 per cent. of UK based staff. We will extend this to 95 per cent. in 2004 by including our Hanslope Park site.

The EMS aims to improve the FCO's environmental performance. Examples of improvements already made include:

100 per cent. of electricity used in the Main Building is from renewable sources.

The range of waste recycled now includes fluorescent tubes, paper, unsaleable furniture, and toner cartridges. A new waste contract in 2004 will extend the range of waste recycled in line with Government targets.

We have implemented revised government policy on the purchase of sustainable timber. We also purchase a range of energy-efficient equipment and office supplies. All major contracts are evaluated against environmental performance.

All new FCO buildings, in the UK and overseas are designed to comply with best practice, including sustainable development issues.

In the UK, we have met the interim Government energy target of reducing carbon emissions from buildings through closer temperature control, and the purchase of renewable energy for the Main Building. This also helped us meet the target for the purchase of energy exempt from the climate change levy.

Overseas Posts are required to apply the same environmental principles where possible. Some have undertaken local environmental initiatives. But it would be impracticable to apply the full UK programme with immediate effect to all 232 Posts in the overseas estate.

European Commission (Defence Research)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to support defence research and development expenditure by the European Commission. [149639]

Mr. MacShane: The UK supports a European Security and Defence Policy, where the responsibility for decisions relating to defence, including research and development, rests primarily with Member States (Articles 13 and 17 of the Treaty on European Union). The Government recognises the need to consider the scope for co-operation with the Community's civil research programmes. The Community's programmes, under Article 163 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC), cover "promoting all the research activities deemed necessary by virtue of other chapters of this Treaty [the TEC]". In this context, in November 2003, the General Affairs and External Relations Council agreed to create an Agency, under the authority of the Council, whose responsibilities would include "promoting, in liaison with the Community's research activities where appropriate, research aimed at fulfilling future defence and security capabilities requirements".

Immigration

Mr. Nigel Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people entered the UK from *(a)* Papua New Guinea, *(b)* Jordan and *(c)* East Timor in the latest year for which figures are available. [151150]

Beverley Hughes: I have been asked to reply. The latest available information shows that a total of 22,200 Jordanian nationals were admitted to the United Kingdom during 2002.

I regret that is not possible to identify nationals of Papua New Guinea and East Timor separately in our admission statistics.

Data on passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom are published in the Command Paper 'Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2002' (Cm6053), obtainable from the Library, The Stationery Office and via the Home Office website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hobpubs1.html

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many personnel are serving with the Iraq Survey Group in Iraq; of those how many are British; and if he will make a statement. [151668]

Mr. Straw: There are, at present, 1,272 personnel serving with the Iraq Survey Group. Of these, 52 are British. These figures may change on an almost daily basis due to the regular roulement of staff. Over the past nine months there has been an average of approximately 1,400 personnel. Figures for British personnel vary according to the availability of suitably qualified staff.

Latvia

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Latvian Government concerning prospects for a referendum on the proposed European Constitution in Latvia; and if he will make a statement. [151708]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not discussed with the Latvian government prospects for a referendum on the draft EU Constitutional Treaty. Our Embassy in Riga follows Latvian Government policy on this and other issues. The Latvian Government has said that it has no plans for a referendum.

Middle East

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with EU colleagues about *(a)* trade policy towards Israel and *(b)* aid policy towards the Palestinian territories; and if he will make a statement. [151676]

Mr. Straw: EU Foreign Ministers regularly discuss Israel and the Palestinian territories at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in the context of our discussions on the Middle East Peace Process.

EU Foreign Ministers discussed the EU position for the EU/Israel Association Council at the GAERC on 17 November 2003. The Association Council discusses political and economic issues, including trade. EU Ministers in December agreed to further liberalisation of agricultural trade between the EU and Israel and on 1 January 2004 this round of liberalisation came into force.

I discussed with EU colleagues aid policy towards the Palestinian territories at the GAERC on 29 September 2003. As stated in the Council conclusions, "the EU, as the largest donor to the Palestinian territories, supported the Quartet's call on the International and Regional Community to assist the Palestinian Authority in the implementation of reforms, institution-building and socio-economic development".

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times since 1997 UK officials have raised human rights concerns and the plight of the Palestinians with Israeli officials; and if he will make a statement. [151677]

Mr. Straw: We have frequently lobbied the Government of Israel since 1997 about human rights concerns and the plight of the Palestinians. But many of the details of this lobbying are no longer held centrally and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost. However, our lobbying has increased since the start of the intifada in September 2000.

Among the issues raised on many occasions in 2003 were:

civilian casualties;

targeted assassinations;

demolitions;

confiscation of land;

prisoners held in administrative detention;

impact of the fence and "closed zone";

settlements and outposts;

inappropriate behaviour by the Israel Defence Forces and rules of engagement;

checkpoints and other internal barriers;

the closure and curfew regimes;

the hindrance to the movement of humanitarian aid;

access problems for humanitarian workers and other essential staff;

movement restrictions of dual nationals.

Separately, we have also raised issues concerning the Bedouin and Arab Israelis.

Mr. Robert Ellis

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1162W, on Mr. Robert Ellis, what the nature was of the representations made and of the response given during the discussion of the case of Mr. Robert Ellis that took place between the Minister of State and the Head of the Turkish European Secretariat General in Ankara on 13 January. [151768]

Mr. MacShane: As I said in my answer of 20 January and in my letter of 7 January to the right hon. Member, Robert Ellis has received an extraordinary level of support from British Ministers and our diplomatic, commercial and consular network in Turkey. My own meeting with the European Union Secretariat General in Ankara on 13 January was simply the most recent occasion on which we drew attention to our continuing interest in this case. Our concerns were noted.

Pakistan

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Pakistan's adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 1373. [151672]

Mr. Straw: Pakistan has submitted three reports to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee, showing commitment and real progress in meeting the requirements of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373. Pakistan has signed or ratified 10 of the 12 anti-terrorism conventions, and is an important partner on counter-terrorism. We are encouraged by Pakistan's efforts and will continue to work closely with Pakistan in this area.

Security Council Resolutions

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of international compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1373; which countries have not fully complied; and if he will make a statement. [151669]

Mr. Straw: The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) was established in order to encourage and ensure global compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373. The CTC works to promote full implementation of the Resolution by UN member states in a transparent and effective manner. All member states are engaged in this process. Reaching full compliance is an ongoing process with long-term action for many States. The CTC's monitoring of this is continuous.

The CTC reviews and replies to states' reports, which outline the domestic provisions in place and the progress made in fighting terrorism in accordance with the Resolution. In addition to reviewing and replying to states' reports, the CTC promotes compliance with Resolution 1373 by facilitating technical assistance to states, and encouraging co-operation with international and regional bodies to strengthen counter-terrorism capacity building globally.

The Committee is currently reviewing its reporting requirements and mechanism in an effort to encourage fuller and more timely reporting, and further substantive progress, from all member states. The UK remains a strong and active supporter of this effort.

Taiwan

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the country-specific visa code is for Taiwan nationals. [150634]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: I have been asked to reply.

The country-specific code used to identify nationals from Taiwan is TWN. This is based on ISO3166 data from UN Statistics Division List 31 July 2003, and International Civil Aviation Organisation Code List 11 February 2003.

Terrorism

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the states which have *(a)* signed and *(b)* ratified the International Convention for the suppression of the financing of terrorism; and if he will make a statement. [151670]

Mr. Straw: To date, 105 states have ratified the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism convention, while a further 46 are signatories. The UK signed it on 10 January 2000 and ratified it on 7 March 2001. Further information on which countries have signed and ratified, and when they did, is available on the UN website: www.untreaty.un.org.

This convention is an important instrument imposing international standards for countering the financing of terrorism. The UK actively encourages international partners to ratify and fully implement its provisions, including through the EU, G8 and the UN.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 calls on all states to adhere to the suppression of the financing of terrorism convention, as well as a number of other counter-terrorism measures, including the UN's 11 other counter-terrorism conventions. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee monitors member states' adherence to Resolution 1373, including ratifying and implementing the conventions.

HEALTH

"Agenda for Change"

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the projected total *(a)* wage and *(b)* administration costs for implementation of the "Agenda for Change" are; and whether these costs have changed after evaluation of the 12 early implementer sites. [150642]

Mr. Hutton: The total annual costs of the proposed new national health service pay system, "Agenda for Change", in England are estimated to be just under £1 billion by 2005–06 (compared with costs in 2002–03). The Department of Health, NHS employer representatives and NHS trades unions are monitoring closely the cost impact in the 12 'early implementer' sites, but it is too early to re-assess the national cost estimates in the light of experience in these sites. The cost estimate excludes non-recurrent costs involved in implementing the new system, which are difficult to estimate accurately and are being tested through the 'early implementer' process.

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money has been allocated to each *(a)* primary care trust, *(b)* acute and specialist hospital trust, *(c)* mental health trust, *(d)* ambulance trust and *(e)* strategic health authority in England for each of the next five years to implement the "Agenda for Change" programme. [151143]

Mr. Hutton: Additional funding, worth 0.8 per cent. of main allocations, has been allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs) in 2004–05 and a further 0.8 per cent. in 2005–06 to cover the costs of implementing "Agenda for Change" in acute and specialist hospital trusts, mental health trusts, ambulance trusts and PCTs themselves. Funding for implementation costs in strategic health authorities is currently being assessed but has not yet been allocated.

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost of developing the nationally agreed job profiles for the "Agenda for Change" programme has been. [151145]

Mr. Hutton: National job profiles for the proposed new national health service pay system, "Agenda for Change", have been developed in partnership between representatives of the United Kingdom Health Departments, the NHS Modernisation Agency, NHS trade unions and NHS employing organisations. It is not possible to give an accurate estimate of the costs incurred by these organisations in releasing staff for this purpose.

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much his Department has spent on knowledge and skills framework training for staff and managers in the 12 early implementer sites as part of the "Agenda for Change" programme; and what his estimate is of the total cost to the NHS of knowledge and skills framework staff training; [151146]

(2) how much has been spent on job evaluation training for staff and managers in the 12 early implementer sites as part of the "Agenda for Change" programme; and what his estimate is of the total cost to the NHS for staff training in job evaluation. [151147]

Mr. Hutton: The direct costs so far incurred centrally in providing training in use of the proposed new national health service job evaluation system and NHS knowledge and skills framework are around £256,000. This excludes the costs incurred by NHS organisations in making staff available to receive training.

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff in the 12 early implementer sites have had a reduction in pay consequent on the "Agenda for Change" programme; and how many staff in the NHS *(a)* immediately after implementation and *(b)* after April 2011 will have a reduction in pay consequent on the programme. [151148]

Mr. Hutton: As a result of agreed pay protection arrangements, none of the national health service staff in the 12 'early implementer' sites will have had a reduction in pay as a result of the "Agenda for Change" pay modernisation programme, nor will any other NHS staff receive a reduction in pay after implementation of the proposed new pay system. Where, in a minority of cases, staff need to have their pay protected, there will be a review of their skills, knowledge and role as soon as possible during the period of protection. This will be used to assess whether they can be re-assigned to a more highly weighted job or offered development and training to fit them for a more highly weighted job. This is designed to keep to an absolute minimum the number of staff, if any, who are still covered by the protection arrangements immediately before those expire in April 2011.

Agency Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 13 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 708W, on agency staff, if he will estimate the cost of fraud covered by criminal prosecutions; and what extrapolation has been made from these figures of the wider cost of timesheet fraud. [149853]

Mr. Hutton: The value of detected fraud amounts to £33,465 in those cases resulting in criminal prosecution of agency staff. No wider, meaningful extrapolation can be made from this figure.

Bournemouth and Christchurch (NHS Trust)

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Trust had its Commission for Health Improvement assessment reduced from three stars to two stars in July 2003. [150534]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals national health service trust received a two star rating in July 2002 because its clinical governance review report from the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) did not show enough strengths to allow a three star rating to be awarded by the Department of Health. The trust was awarded a three star rating by CHI in July 2003.

Dentistry

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Dental Manpower Review will be published. [147514]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 13 January 2004]:* We have now completed the first review of the dental workforce since 1987 and plan shortly to publish the report with the Government's response to its findings.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the progress primary care trusts have made towards assuming responsibility for NHS dentistry in April 2005. [147503]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Responsibility for administration of the general dental services arrangements passed from health authorities to primary care trusts (PCTs) in October 2002. The National Primary and Care Trust Development Programme (NatPaCT) published a dentistry competency framework to support PCTs during the transition.

Proposals in the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 for primary dental services will underpin a modernised, high-quality primary dental service provided through contracts between PCTs and dental practices, properly integrated with the rest of the national health service and providing better access to services with an improved patient experience. The NatPaCT programme will continue to support PCTs through to implementation in April 2005.

The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act also provides for the replacement of the existing Dental Practice Board by a new special health authority for England and Wales with a wider remit for modernisation and change. This will happen in 2005. In the meantime, shadow arrangements are in place to work in partnership with the existing Dental Practice Board to lead the modernisation process and provide support to PCTs and dentists to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* received the Dental Workforce Review; and when he will publish the review report. [150809]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* We commissioned the first Dental Workforce Review since 1987 in July 2001. It was completed last autumn and we plan shortly to publish the report with our response to its findings.

Epilepsy

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to ensure that the risks of misdiagnosis of epilepsy are minimised in local delivery of services. [152302]

Dr. Ladyman: We expect several related policies to help reduce the number of cases of misdiagnosis of epilepsy. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has already made its report of the National Clinical Audit of Epilepsy Related Death available to local national health service clinicians and organisations to help improve the management of epilepsy and epilepsy-related death. NICE is also planning to publish a clinical guideline for the diagnosis, management and treatment in July 2004 which will be available to the NHS to support improvements in services. Additionally, implementation of the clinical quality standards of the new general medical services contract from April 2004 will help improve the management of epilepsy in primary care. We are also developing the national service framework (NSF) for long term conditions which will focus on improving the standard of neurology services across England for conditions such as epilepsy. We currently plan to publish the NSF in December 2004 for implementation from 2005.

General Practitioners (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there are per head of population in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [151281]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not available in the format requested. However, information for the primary care trusts in Lancashire is shown in the table.

Primary care trust	*GPs per 100,000 population*
Blackburn with Darwen PCT	62
Blackpool PCT	60
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	56
Chorley and South Ribble PCT	59
Fylde PCT	56
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	63
Preston PCT	52
West Lancashire PCT	55
Wyre PCT	65

Sources:
1. Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.
2. 2001 ONS Population Census.

GP Contract

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimates he has made of the number of general practitioners who will opt out of night-time cover following the introduction of the new contract; and what contingency plans he has in place to tackle any reduction in cover. [142260]

Mr. Hutton: Under the new general medical services contract, which is to be introduced from April 2004, general practitioners (GPs) will be able to opt-out completely from responsibility for care during the out-of-hours period and it will become a responsibility of the

local primary care trust (PCT) who are working with local practices to establish how many intend to exercise this option. We expect that a large majority will exercise this right to opt out of responsibility for arranging out of hours services.

Many GPs will still participate in the delivery of out-of-hours services organised under the auspices of the PCT. Patients will therefore continue to have access to a GP if their condition requires the attention of a doctor.

These changes provide a challenge for PCTs, but they also provide an opportunity for PCTs to review and reconfigure the provision of out-of-hours services across their area and to co-ordinate this with other services including accident and emergency, social care and in-hours services such as national health service walk-in centres.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health by what means a general practitioner practice can increase its level of funding. [150372]

Mr. Hutton: The new general medical services contract funds practices on the basis of patient need and the range and quality of services provided. Practices can increase their funding by providing higher quality services and services that contribute to the expansion of primary care. United Kingdom expenditure on primary care services will rise from £6.1 billion in 2002–03 to £8.0 billion by 2005–06.

Havering

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many general practitioners were appointed in the London borough of Havering in the last 12 months; and how many vacancies there were in that period; [150367]

(2) how many general practitioners are in practice in the Havering area. [150368]

Mr. Hutton: A total of six general practitioners were appointed in Havering Primary Care Trust (PCT) within the period between year end 2002 and June 2003.

Figures for GP vacancies in the 12 month period up to 31 March 2003 are shown in table 1.

GP numbers in Havering PCT are shown in table 2.

1. GP vacancy numbers in Havering PCT[2], 2003

	Headcount
England total	[1]3,245
of which	
London total	[1]459
of which	
North East London SHA	104
of which	
Havering PCT	10

[1] 1 PCT (Sutton and Merton PCT, South West London SHA) did not respond to the survey

[2] Figures show total number of vacancies occurring at any time in the 12 month period up to 31 March 2003

Note:

No figures for PCTs are available before 2003 as previous years vacancy numbers were collected from health authorities

Source:

Department of Health GP Recruitment, Retention and Vacancy survey 2003

2. General Medical Practitioners[1] within Havering PCT: 2001—June 2003

Numbers (headcount)

	2001	*2002*	*June 2003*
England	31,835	32,292	33,082
of which:			
North East London SHA	908	954	969
of which:			
Havering PCT	122	124	130

[1] All Practitioners include QMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs, PMS Salaried GPs, Restricted Principals, Assistants, GP Registrars, Salaried Doctors (para 52 SFA), PMS Other, GP Retainers and Flexible Career Scheme GPs Data as at 30 September 2001–02 and 30 June 2003

Source:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the operating costs of the NHS in the London borough of Havering were in the financial year 2003–04. [150374]

Mr. Hutton: Audited final accounts figures for the financial year 2003–2004 will not be available until Autumn 2004.

However, Havering's total personal social services budget for 2003–04 is £56.667 million, 4.8 per cent., more than its forecast outturn for 2002–03. The 2003–04 national average increase in expenditure is 11.7 per cent.

Havering Primary Care Trust's allocation for 2003–04 is £214.0 million, a 7.2 per cent., increase in real terms and a 9.6 per cent., increase in cash terms.

Health Services (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money has been allocated to NHS services in Chorley in each of the last three years. [151241]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Allocations to the former South Lancashire Health Authority, 2001–02 and 2002–03, and Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust for 2003–04 are shown in the table.

Up to the end of 2002–03 national health service services for Chorley were funded through the South Lancashire Health Authority which covers a wider region. From 2003–04 services are funded through Chorley and South Ribble PCT.

Allocations were as follows.

Allocations

£000

	South Lancashire Health Authority	*Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust*
2001–02	223,342	[1]—
2002–03	247,205	[1]—
2003–04	[1]—	171,696

Histopathology

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the vacancy *(a)* rates and *(b)* numbers for histopathology in (i) England and (ii) each region in each year since 1997. [147932]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has collected vacancy data since 1999.

Information showing the three-month vacancy rates and numbers for histopathology in England by Government office region between March 2001 and March 2003 has been placed in the Library. The individual specialty of histopathology was not collected in the vacancy surveys in 1999 and 2000.

Isolation Wards

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospitals have dedicated purpose-built isolation and infection control wards. [145046]

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many English NHS hospitals have dedicated infection control wards. [147500]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Health Service Circular 2000/002 on the "Management and control of hospital infection" required trusts to undertake a risk assessment to determine appropriate provision of isolation facilities within each trust but these date were not collected centrally.

The Chief Medical Officer published his report "Winning Ways—Working together to reduce Healthcare Associated Infection in England", in December 2003 and this states that "NHS Trust Chief Executives will ensure that, over time, there is appropriate provision of isolation facilities within their healthcare facilities".

Mental Health

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards meeting the National Service Framework for Mental Health in the areas of *(a)* early intervention, *(b)* support for carers and *(c)* waiting times for mental health services; and if he will make a statement. [149867]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Good progress is being made with implementing the national service framework for mental health.

As part of the programme to develop early intervention services, 27 early intervention teams have been put in place.

In accordance with the national service framework for mental health standard six, carers of people with mental health problems are now entitled to an assessment of their caring, physical and mental health needs and to have their own written care plan. Services are also working towards employing 700 carer support workers by the end of the year.

With the development of new community based mental health services such as crisis resolution teams, progress is also being made with reducing waiting times for mental health services.

Information relating to waiting times for in-patient and out-patient mental health services has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards the target to *(a)* reduce the duration of untreated psychosis to a service median of less than three months and *(b)* provide support for the first three years for all young people who develop a first episode of psychosis, by 2004. [150046]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with the commitments outlined in the "NHS Plan" and the "Priorities and Planning Framework 2003–06", early intervention services are being developed across England. As part of this, 27 early intervention teams have been put in place to provide care and treatment for young people who develop a first episode of psychosis.

It is envisaged that the duration of untreated psychosis will decrease as early intervention teams continue to develop across the country.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what definition he uses of *(a)* mental health crisis resolution teams, *(b)* mental health assertive outreach teams, *(c)* mental health early intervention teams and *(d)* secure personality disorder places, as established by his Department; and how many of each there are. [150047]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Detailed service specifications for crisis resolution, early intervention and assertive outreach teams are contained in the "Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide" (2001), which is available from the Department's web-site at www.doh.gov.uk/mentalhealth/implementationguide.htm.

There are 238 assertive outreach, 132 crisis resolution and 27 early intervention teams currently in place in England.

Secure personality disorder places are intended for those people who are assessed as dangerous as a result of a severe personality disorder. These services are being designed to treat those people who demonstrate a clear functional link between their personality disorder and their offending behaviour, and who pose a high risk to the public.

A ten bed pilot unit is already in operation and there will be 140 more secure personality disorder places in Broadmoor and Rampton Hospitals by the end of the year.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend the use of primary care models for treating mental health, with specific reference to the role of general practitioners. [151791]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The Department of Health and the Royal College of General Practitioners have produced a framework for implementing a scheme for general practitioners with special interests. As part of this framework; guidelines for primary care trusts and staff have been developed to provide more specific recommendations for general practitioners with a special interest in mental health. These developments

are in line with the NHS Plan commitment to recruit up to 1,000 general practitioners with special interests by 2004.

The new general medical services contract offers new incentives and rewards for practices that meet prescribed quality standards in caring for people with mental health problems. Under the general medical services contract primary care trusts may commission enhanced services. Specialist care of people with depression has been identified as a national enhanced service. Primary care trusts may also commission local enhanced services to address locally identified needs.

Services are also working towards the NHS Plan commitment to recruit up to 1,000 graduate mental health workers who are trained in brief therapy techniques of proven effectiveness to help general practitioners treat common mental health problems in primary care.

Midwives

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to reduce the three-month vacancy rate for midwives in London since March; and if he will make a statement. [140582]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 1 December 2003]:* In line with our policy of shifting the balance of power we have devolved more power to the frontline of the national health service to ensure that more decisions, such as staffing levels, could be made locally where they will have a greater impact on delivery. Responsibility for reducing vacancy rates now rests with strategic health authorities.

Between 30 September 2000 and 30 September 2002 the number of midwives in London increased by 202.

In 2003–04, £88,500 has been allocated to London work force development confederations to fund return to practice places for midwives.

Mobile Phones

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the health implications of *(a)* mobile phones and *(b)* mobile phone masts. [150906]

Miss Melanie Johnson: On 21 January 2004, I wrote to all right hon. and hon. Members describing the current position as follows:

Mobile phone technology and health issues have hit the headlines again following the publication of a scientific review by the National Radiological Protection Board's Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR). News headlines about such issues tend to raise the levels of people's concern and you may well receive inquiries about mobile phones or mobile phone base stations. I am glad to say that the report confirms the conclusions of the Stewart Report and there is no new evidence suggesting that mobile phone use is likely to cause ill health in the general population. In the words of AGNIR's carefully considered report:

"The weight of evidence now available does not suggest that there are adverse health effects from exposures to RF fields below guideline levels, but the published research on RF exposures and health has limitations, and mobile phones have only been in widespread use for a relatively short time. The possibility therefore remains open that there could be health effects from exposure to RF fields below guideline levels; hence continued research is needed."

The rapid expansion of mobile phone telecommunications has brought with it huge benefits to individuals and the business community. Government are however taking seriously the concerns that people have that there might be health effects resulting from exposure to radiofrequency signals from this technology. It is for this reason that the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (IEGMP) was set up under the chairmanship of Sir William Stewart FRS, FRSE.

Sir William's expert group published its report on Mobile Phones and Health in May 2000 and it can be read in full on the website (www.iegmp.org.uk). The overall conclusion was that

"the balance of evidence to date suggests that exposures to RF (radiofrequency) radiation below guidelines do not cause health effects to the general population."

They went on to say that the emerging new technology should be accompanied by appropriate research and that a further review of the evidence for potential health effects should be reviewed in three years or earlier if circumstances demand it. These were just two of the 30 or so Stewart recommendations that have subsequently been acted upon by Government Departments or by the appropriate agencies.

The siting of base stations was identified by the Stewart group as an issue of some concern. When they examined all the scientific evidence they concluded that

"there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guidelines."

About 300 measurements undertaken by the Radiocommunications Agency (RA), now part of Ofcom, have confirmed that public exposures are very much lower than the widely accepted guidelines published by the International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). This information is available on the websites of these organisations: www.ofcom.org.uk and www.icnirp.de.

Although the Stewart Group did not identify any adverse health effects caused by exposures by mobile phones or base stations they were aware that if people are unduly concerned about potential exposures then that in itself may affect their well-being. They made a number of recommendations, therefore, designed to provide more information about mobile phones and base stations. The Department of Health has produced a pair of leaflets and these can be seen on the Department's website www.doh.gov.uk/mobilephones. A description of work undertaken by various organisations since the Stewart Report has been written by Dr. John W. Stather of the NRPB entitled "Mobile Phones and Health—an Update". This article was published on the NRPB website http://www.nrpb.org/publications/bulletin/no3/article3.htm) in March 2003 and provides more detailed information on the issues.

The sites of base stations in this country are now shown on the Sitefinder location of the Ofcom website www.ofcom.org.uk. Planning arrangements have been improved and a "Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone

Network Development" has been developed with the aim of providing for more discussions between operators, local authorities and members of the public. The booklet and current planning arrangements (PPG8—Policy Planning Guidance on Telecommunications) can be found on the ODPM website www.planning.odpm.gov.uk.

Over the last few years a number of groups have assessed the possible health effects of exposure to RF radiation such as from mobile phones and mobile phone masts. These include reports from Canada (1999), the Netherlands (2000), France (2001, 2003) and the British Medical Association (2001). These groups have come to broadly similar conclusions to the Stewart Report and have recommended further research. The new AGNIR review also supports the Stewart conclusions.

Public interest in mobile phone base stations has been quite marked recently and a number of concerted campaigns against mobile phone masts have come to my attention. I am pleased that the AGNIR report has addressed this issue and concluded that

"Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health."

Having considered research issues, AGNIR has helpfully made a number of specific recommendations that aim to improve the quality and interpretability of future health-related research and current health research programmes.

The Government, in conjunction with industry, are already sponsoring a £7.4 million research programme in this country on a number of important health related issues identified in the Stewart Report. The research is being carried out under the management of an independent Programme Management Committee. The research is mainly concerned with users of mobile phone handsets as recommended in the Stewart Report but has recently decided to extend its range of studies to accommodate concerns about exposures from base stations. Full details of the research studies and the committee membership can be found on the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research website: www.mthr.org.uk. This programme represents a significant contribution to a world-wide research effort encompassing the World Health Organisation (WHO), the European Union, the United States and others.

The Department continues to monitor research largely through the work of National Radiological Protection Board who have a statutory duty to advise on risks from all types of radiation. The AGNIR report was placed on the NRPB web site on 14 January 2004 http://www.nrpb.org./ review/docs nrpb/absd14–2.htm

Nanoparticles

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the potential for nanoparticles used in consumer goods to slip through membranes and lodge in the brain. [150115]

Ms Hewitt: I have been asked to reply.

My Department has not made any assessment of the potential for nanoparticles used in consumer goods to slip through membranes into the brain. We are aware that recent research has raised concerns in this area.

Last year, my Department commissioned an independent study by the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering to examine in detail the risks and benefits of nanotechnology. The study includes consideration of environmental, health and safety, ethical and social implications of the technology, both now and in the future, and its outcomes will be used to inform policy on what safeguards might be required, over and above existing legislation and guidance. We expect a report to Government in late spring 2004.

NHS Bereavement Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects his Department to undertake a follow-up survey on NHS bereavement services as outlined on the Chief Medical Officer's webpage. [148246]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department plans to support a follow-up survey on national health service bereavement services in the spring of this year as outlined in the Chief Medical Officer's web page.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library a copy of the results of the Department's survey of the scale and scope of NHS bereavement services. [148247]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's survey of bereavement services available in the national health service acute trusts was undertaken in the summer of 2001. A report of this survey is available on the Department's website at: www.doh.gov.uk/bereavement

NHS Governance

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what declaration of political affiliation health board convenors are required to make. [152152]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments requires that all candidates for appointment to non-executive positions on the boards of public bodies are asked to make a declaration on any political activity undertaken (as opposed to political affiliation). This is for monitoring purposes only and the information is not passed on to sifting and interview panels considering candidates for appointment. Complaints convenors who are also non-executives will therefore have been asked to make such a declaration. However, those who are not non-executives will not have been asked.

NHS Staff Council

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the costs *(a)* are of establishing and *(b)* were estimated to be in each of the next five years of running the NHS Staff Council. [151149]

Mr. Hutton: There are not expected to be any additional costs involved in establishing or running the proposed new NHS Staff Council. The NHS Staff Council and the new Pay Negotiating Council for non-Review Body staff will between them replace the General Whitley Council and 11 functional Whitley Councils and other negotiating bodies for different national health service staff groups. This is expected to result in a more

streamlined and efficient system for overseeing NHS pay issues and agreeing future changes to pay, terms and conditions.

Nursing and Midwifery Council

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the fee to nurses is for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council; and what it was in each of the last five years. [152123]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The Nursing and Midwifery Council is an independent statutory body and this information is available directly from that organisation.

Performance Indicators

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many performance indicators were in place for NHS Trusts in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2001–02. [148490]

Mr. Hutton: The independent Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) has published the set of indicators which will be used to rate national health service organisations in 2003–04.

The number of indicators are shown in the table.

	Number
Acute and specialist trusts	44
Ambulance trusts	24
Mental health trusts	38
Primary care trusts	42

The Department of Health published a limited set of performance indicators for 2001–02 in July 2002, as shown in the table.

	Number
Acute trusts	37
Specialist trusts	29
Ambulance trusts	10
Mental health trusts	16
Primary care trusts	[1]21

[1] Primary care trusts were measured against these indicators, but were not performance rated in 2001–02.

Post-mortems

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* hospital and *(b)* coroners' post-mortems were carried out in each of the last 10 years. [150359]

Mr. Hutton: Information on hospital post mortems is not collected centrally. The annual total of coroners' post mortems carried out in the period 1993–2002, the latest year for which information is available, is shown in the table.

000s

	Coroners post mortems
1993	129.1
1994	125.2
1995	126.4
1996	126.2
1997	123.0
1998	124.4
1999	124.8
2000	124.5
2001	121.1
2002	117.7

Respite Care (Children)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many projects he has visited that provide respite care that deal with children who are terminally ill. [151667]

Dr. Ladyman: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, has not had the opportunity to visit any projects whose sole remit is to provide respite care for terminally ill children. Should an opportunity arise to undertake such a visit, he would give it his full consideration.

Secure/Forensic Facilities

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with the Department's aim to ensure appropriate use of secure and forensic facilities by 2004. [150044]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As part of the Government's programme to modernise mental health services, an accelerated discharge programme is under way aimed at moving up to 400 patients from high security hospitals to more appropriate accommodation by 2004. The programme is on track to meet its target.

Acute Beds (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* stroke units and *(b)* acute beds there are in the NHS in Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement. [149465]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on beds is collected annually from each national health service trust. The average daily number of available acute beds for 2002–03 for Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust was 1,142. Information on the number of stroke units is not held centrally.

Waiting Times

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to collect and publish information from NHS trusts on waiting times for diagnostic testing; and if he will make a statement. [150541]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* Data are not collected specifically on waiting times for diagnostic tests. Waiting times are collected on the consultant's main specialty. There have been no substantive changes to the basis on which waiting times are calculated during the lifetime of this Government.

The Government aims to improve access to diagnostic services and the Department is working in partnership with strategic health authorities and other stakeholders to ensure a responsive service.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish recent guidance which his Department has given to *(a)* health authorities and *(b)* NHS trusts

on the recording of waiting times for (i) diagnostic tests and (ii) consultant to consultant referrals; and if he will make a statement. [150542]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* There has been no recent guidance issued by the Department.

The Department recently provided clarification on how angiographies should be recorded and reported.

Information on the recording of waiting times is available on the Department's website. Further advice is available directly from the Department via its mailbox.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Anti-Social Behaviour

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 was not extended to Northern Ireland; and what discussions he had with his colleagues in the Northern Ireland Office during the Bill's passage through Parliament in relation to the extension of Part 8 to Northern Ireland. [150663]

Ms Blears: The high hedges provisions were introduced into the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill following extensive consultation in England and Wales and after lengthy discussions in Parliament as several Private Members' Bills failed to become law. The consultation showed widespread support for legislation to give local authorities in England and Wales the powers to deal with complaints about high hedges.

No similar consultation has been conducted in Northern Ireland and there is no solid evidence to suggest that legislation is necessary. We have kept our colleagues in the Northern Ireland Office in touch with our proposals for England and Wales throughout.

Asylum Detention Centres

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the constituencies being considered for detention centres for asylum seekers. [151269]

Beverley Hughes: As part of the expansion of the detention estate we are exploring the possibility of various sites throughout the country. However we are at an early stage. As soon as we seriously consider any particular site we will put it into the public domain and the local MP(s) will be notified.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was in each of the last five years of the administration of the National Asylum Support Service. [147784]

Beverley Hughes: The administration cost of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) for the last five years was as follows.

	£ million
1998–99	[1]—
1999–2000	[1]—
2000–01	36
2001–02	36
2002–03	[2]—

[1] NASS was established as a separate directorate within Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) from 2000–01. Equivalent administration costs for prior years are not separately identifiable.
[2] The actuals for 2002–03 are yet to be audited and published.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was in each of the last five years of the support of asylum seekers under the 1999 legislation. [147785]

Beverley Hughes: The asylum support costs for the last five years was as follows:

	Costs
1998–99	475
1999–2000	589
2000–01	747
2001–02	1,046
2002–03	[1]—

[1] The actuals for 2002–03 are yet to be audited and published.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was in each of the last five years of overseas transport for those asylum seekers deported and removed from the United Kingdom. [147786]

Beverley Hughes: The cost in each of the last five years of overseas transport for both asylum and non-asylum removals from the United Kingdom was as follows:

	Total (£000)
1998–99	4,384
1999–2000	4,515
2000–01	6,068
2001–02	11,485
2002–03	[1]—

[1] The actuals for 2002–03 are yet to be audited and published.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was in each of the last five years of detention in *(a)* detention centres and *(b)* elsewhere. [147788]

Beverley Hughes: The cost in each of the last five years the cost of detention in detention centres and elsewhere for the Immigration and Nationality Directorate was as follows:

	£000
1998–99	10,219
1999–2000	13,821
2000–01	24,979
2001–02	47,243
2002–03	[1]—

[1] The actuals for 2002–03 are yet to be audited and published.

These costs include both the actual costs of holding detainees and expenditure related to the expansion of the detention estate during this period. It is not possible to separate these costs.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the difference is between an induction centre and a detention centre; and if he will list those centres which are both induction and detention centres. [147864]

Beverley Hughes: Differences between induction centres and detention centres, which were renamed removal centres under section 66 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, are substantial. Induction Centres provide additional services for the asylum applicant, including health screening, and initiate the consideration of their asylum claim and support needs. Induction Centres provide short-term accommodation, where necessary, prior to dispersal. Accommodation and services are provided in a variety of buildings which are expected to have a low profile in the existing community. Asylum applicants staying in induction centres are not detained and are free to leave their accommodation. Removal centres provide safe and secure accommodation for those who are detained under immigration legislation. No facility acts as both a centre for induction and detention.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers were removed from the UK in each month since January 2002; how many of these were part of the voluntary assisted return programme; to what countries individuals were returned; and how long they had been present in the UK before their repatriation. [148040]

Beverley Hughes: The number of asylum seekers removed from the United Kingdom in each month from January 2002 to September 2003 (the latest month for which data are available) is shown in the table.

Of the 10,740 principal asylum applicants removed from the United Kingdom in 2002, 895 departed under the Voluntary Assisted Return Programmes (VARP). Information on the number of these who departed each month is not available. Data on the number departing under the VARP programmes in 2003 will be published at the end of August on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration.html

Information on the destination of people removed from the UK and the length of time that they had been present here prior to departure is not available, except by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

Assisted Voluntary Returns aim to secure the dignified, safe and sustainable return of those who wish to leave the UK voluntarily. The International Organisation for Migration, which runs this programme on behalf of the Home Office, will assist the returnee prior to departure with counselling and independent advice. They will also help with travel arrangements, tickets etc.

On arrival in their country of origin the returnee can receive, if they so choose, reintegration assistance worth up to approximately £500 (not cash). Reintegration assistance includes help in the country of origin to access existing services such as health, education and housing. Employment-related training and help to access available employment is also offered to enhance the sustainability of the return.

Asylum Removals January 2002 to September 2003 [1,2]

Month	*Principal applicants*	*Dependants*	*Total*
January 2002	855	155	1,050
February 2002	865	150	1,015
March 2002	725	135	860
April 2002	860	165	1,025
May 2002	955	180	1,135
June 2002	845	230	1,075
July 2002	970	245	1,215
August 2002	995	310	1,305
September 2002	845	295	1,135
October 2002	945	340	1,285
November 2002	965	370	1,335
December 2002	920	550	1,470
January 2003	770	390	1,160
February 2003	890	455	1,350
March 2003	955	525	1,480
April 2003	1,025	395	1,420
May 2003	1,175	405	1,580
June 2003	945	335	1,285
July 2003	1,230	395	1,630
August 2003	1,075	390	1,470
September 2003	1,120	435	1,560
Total	19,935	6,900	26,835

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them and persons leaving under the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration.
[2] Provisional data.
Note:
Data are rounded to nearest five and may not sum due to rounding.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department where the individuals who participated in the International Organisation for Migration voluntary assisted return programme returned to. [148044]

Beverley Hughes: Of the 10,740 principal asylum applicants removed from the United Kingdom in 2002, 895 departed under the Voluntary Assisted Return Programmes (VARP).

Information on the nationality and destination of asylum seekers who leave under the VARP is not centrally available and could only be obtained by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young people up to 16 years were allowed to enter the United Kingdom from Somalia during 2003. [148070]

Beverley Hughes: The requested information is not available.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what conclusions the Department has reached on data collection methods for the assessment of the number of failed asylum seekers remaining in the UK. [150332]

Beverley Hughes: It is assumed that 'data collection' refers not to failed asylum seekers specifically but to work to assess the size of the illegally resident population in the UK. The Home Office has commissioned a review of methods used in other countries to estimate the size of their illegal populations. The research was commissioned in order to help define methods appropriate for the UK.

The illegally resident population includes overstayers, clandestine entrants and workers in breach of their right to remain in the UK, as well as failed asylum seekers.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what target for the removal of failed asylum seekers has been set. [150334]

Beverley Hughes: Our Public Service Agreement target for asylum removals is to remove a greater proportion of failed asylum seekers from the United Kingdom. The Immigration Service, like other Government Departments, also has various internal measures against which its performance is monitored and managed.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to encourage participation in the Voluntary Assisted Return Programme. [150335]

Beverley Hughes: The Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) is widely advertised directly by the Home Office within the asylum system and through outreach and advice work by non-governmental and international organisations. Information on the programme can be found in Reporting Centres, Reception Centres and Removals Centres as well as from the Home Office website. Asylum seekers who have been refused asylum are sent an information sheet which gives details of how to return voluntarily. We also hold regular meetings with non-governmental and international organisations including the Refugee Council, Refugee Action, UNHCR and IOM to discuss promotion of voluntary return. The voluntary sector organisations conduct outreach work with community groups directly to advise them of the option of voluntary return. The Home Office hosts meetings with Afghan community groups to raise the profile of voluntary return including the Return to Afghanistan Programme and the recently launched Afghan Explore and Prepare Programme.

In the first instance, those who are interested in returning home voluntarily are required to register their interest with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) who are co-funded by the Home Office and the European Refugee Fund (ERF) to operate VARRP.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many strip searches have been conducted at removal centres in the last 12 months. [150338]

Beverley Hughes: Strip searches of adult detainees in immigration removal centres may take place only on the basis of specific evidence or intelligence of a risk to the safety and security of the centre, its staff or other detainees. Central records of the number of such searches are not maintained and the information requested is therefore available only at disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the booking of flights for departing asylum seekers is centrally co-ordinated by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. [150340]

Beverley Hughes: The booking of flights for the removal of asylum seekers is not centrally co-ordinated by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate but is made by the immigration office dealing with the individual case.

Where the removal is to be effected at the expense of the inbound carrier under the provisions of paragraphs 8 and 9 of schedule 2 to the Immigration Act 1971, arrangements will be made directly with the carrier. If removal is to be effected at public expense under paragraph 10 of the same schedule they will be made via the travel company contracted to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate for that purpose. In these cases there is a central unit in the Immigration Service which provides a ticket procurement and payment function for these bookings. These arrangements apply in all removal cases and there are no separate processes for those who have sought asylum here.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed Iraqi asylum seekers *(a)* have been removed from the UK, *(b)* have voluntarily left the UK with government support and *(c)* have otherwise been recorded as leaving the UK in each year since 1997. [150619]

Beverley Hughes: Estimates of the number of nationals of Iraq who had sought asylum at some stage and who were removed from the UK from 1997 to June 2003 (the latest date for which figures are available) are shown in the table. These figures include persons departing 'voluntarily' after the initiation of enforcement action against them, and persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Returns Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration.

Removals and voluntary[1] departures of principal asylum applicants (excluding dependants): January 1997 to June 2003[2,3,4]

	Nationals of Iraq
1997	40
1998	40
1999	n/a
2000	n/a
2001	90
2002	195
January to June 2003	175

n/a = Not available.

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country, grounds.

[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five and may not sum to total due to rounding.

[3] Data have been estimated due to data quality issues.

[4] Provisional figures.

At present removals to Iraq are on a voluntary basis only. Enforced returns will commence when the circumstances are right.

Information on the destination of these removals and whether they departed voluntarily with government support is not available, except by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

Estimates of the nationality of those asylum seekers who were removed from the UK in the third quarter of 2003 are due to be published on 24 February 2004 on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers he estimates are in the UK without legal basis for their presence; and how many are failed Iraqi asylum seekers. [150621]

Beverley Hughes: Information on the total number of asylum seekers currently in the UK, including failed asylum seekers, is not currently available. This could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records. Even such an exercise, however, would not produce a valid estimate as some applicants may leave the United Kingdom without informing the Immigration Service.

The Government have commissioned research into the methods used in other countries to estimate the size of the illegal population in order to define methods appropriate for the UK.

The work required is challenging because, by definition, illegal migrants fall outside official statistics and are therefore difficult to measure. People illegally present in the UK are also motivated to ensure they remain hidden, further compounding the difficulties of conducting research.

The number of cases (principal applicants) awaiting initial decision or awaiting appeal determinations continues to fall as the level of applications falls, initial decisions continue to outstrip the number of applications, and record numbers of appeals are determined by the IAA. The latest published figures show that as at the end of September 2003 there were:

29,100 cases awaiting an initial decision (of this total, 8,500 cases were work in progress, i.e. the application had been outstanding for six months or less), the lowest level for a decade;

an estimated 16,000 appeals lodged with the Home Office which had not been sent to the Immigration Appellate Authority (a proportion of appeals lodged do not result in appeal bundles being sent to the IAA); and

28,800 asylum cases work in progress in the IAA (18,100 at the Adjudicator Tier, 5,600 applications for permission to appeal to the Tribunal, and 5,100 Tribunal Appeals).

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication will be available at the end of February 2004 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Iraqi asylum seekers have returned to Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein. [150622]

Beverley Hughes: Estimates of the number of nationals of Iraq who had sought asylum at some stage and who were removed from the UK since the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003 to June 2003—the latest available figures—are shown in the table. These figures include persons departing 'voluntarily' after the initiation of enforcement action against them, and persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Returns Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration.

Removals and voluntary[1] departures of principal asylum applicants (excluding dependants): April 2003 to June 2003 [2,3,4]

	Nationals of Iraq
April 2003	45
May 2003	25
June 2003	20
Total	85

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds.

[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five and may not sum to total due to rounding.

[3] Data have been estimated due to data quality issues.

[4] Provisional figures.

Information on the destination of these removals is not available.

At present removals to Iraq are on a voluntary basis only, enforced returns will commence when the circumstances are right.

Figures for principal asylum applicants removed from the United Kingdom in the period July to September 2003 will be available after publication of Asylum statistics Quarter 4 2003 on 24 February 2004 on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of time taken to process asylum applications originating in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland was in the last year for which figures are available. [151330]

Beverley Hughes: Information on the average length of time taken to process asylum applications lodged in each of the regions of the UK is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Asylum applications data are not available at regional level.

The latest published statistics show that the speed of processing asylum applications continues to improve. Provisional data show that 81 per cent. of applications received in the period April to June 2003 had initial decisions reached and served within two months and that 74 per cent. of applications (excluding withdrawals and 3rd country cases[1]) received in 2002–03 were decided and served within two months. This exceeded the Government's target of 65 per cent. for 2002–03, and was a significant increase on the corresponding figure of 61 per cent. for 2001–02.

Information on the timeliness of initial decisions is published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

[1] Cases which may be the responsibility of other EU member states under the Dublin Convention.

Asylum Seekers (Children)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what extra resources will be given to local authorities to support the children of failed asylum seekers. [151443]

Beverley Hughes: The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc.) Bill provides that families whose asylum claims have failed would no longer be entitled to support at the expense of the taxpayer if they refuse opportunities to leave the country. If parents fail to take these opportunities to leave and put their children at risk, it would be for the local authority to decide how the interests of the children should be protected under the existing child protection legislation that applies to all children. We do not believe that many, if any, parents would put their children in this position. If this were to happen, the costs would be met by central Government.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children are held in detention centres for asylum seekers. [149822]

Beverley Hughes: The latest available information shows that at the end of September 2003 1,575 people were detained solely under the Immigration Act, of whom 1,270 had sought asylum at some stage. Information on the number of these who were detained as part of a family group is unavailable.

However, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate internal management information indicates that on 8 December 38 children were in detention. This information also indicates that the average time for which children are detained in UK removal centres is about 10 days, although the majority would be in detention for periods less than this.

Bribery

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many allegations of overseas bribery involving UK companies his Department has received from the US Administration since February 1999; on what dates; and what action his Department took on each allegation. [151384]

Paul Goggins: The US Administration has not referred any such allegations to the Home Office. The investigation of allegations of crime is a matter for law enforcement agencies.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150282]

Fiona Mactaggart: Home Office civil servants occupy *(a)* 114,885 square metres of office space in Central London and *(b)* 252, 548 square metres in Greater London. Home Office sponsored Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) occupy a further 30,858 square metres of office space in Central London and 34,628 square metres in Greater London. The figures exclude support offices provided within prisons and other specialised facilities.

Detainees

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* Mr. Anwar al Aulaki (aka al Aulaqi), *(b)* Mr. Yasser Tawfik el-Serri and *(c)* Mr. Hani Yusef al Sebai are (i) detained and (ii) on remand; and if he will make a statement. [151135]

Beverley Hughes: None of the three people mentioned in the question is either (i) detained, or (ii) on remand in the United Kingdom.

Driving Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for *(a)* driving without due care and attention, *(b)* failing to have proper control of a vehicle, *(c)* careless and inconsiderate driving and *(d)* dangerous driving have been secured as a result of evidence from speed cameras. [151419]

Ms Blears: Speed camera evidence can only be used for prosecutions and the issue of fixed penalties for excess speed.

Identity Theft

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to prevent the issuing of passports to people with false identities. [148597]

Beverley Hughes: As indicated in its 2003–08 Corporate and Business Plan, the UK Passport Service is taking forward a range of initiatives to reduce passport fraud through improved fraud detection and prevention. These include:

Continuing work to eliminate fraudulent applications for passports in identities of deceased infants and prosecution of those perpetrating this type of fraud;

The establishment in December 2003 of a new more comprehensive database for the recording and dissemination of lost, stolen and recovered passport information;

Exploring the benefits of using private sector and other government databases in establishing identity;

Developing the training of passport examiners to an accredited standard to ensure that knowledge and competency are regularly tested;

Introducing secure delivery for the despatch of all passports to eliminate thefts and losses in the post;

Increasing the professionalism of its fraud investigation capability through the creation of fraud and intelligence units in each of its offices, and strengthening training and support for these units;

Developing its IT systems to undertake more automatic checks; to better link passport records to an individual; and to identify passport fraud;

Developing the use of facial recognition biometrics to check new applications against images of known fraudsters and to implement more secure passports incorporating biometric identifiers;

Changing the law to align the penalty associated with fraudulently obtaining a driving licence with that for fraudulently obtaining a passport and making these offences arrestable; and by creating a new offence relating to being in possession or control of false identity documents, without reasonable cause; and

Actively working with law enforcement agencies to apprehend, disrupt and dismantle the activities of those involved in passport fraud.

These initiatives build on the successful implementation of a number of anti-fraud measures including the strengthening of the counter signatory requirement for passport applications and the prevention of fraudulent applications using the identity of dead children.

In the context of the latter initiative the United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) have used data provided by the office of National Statistics to stop 408 passport applications in the identities of dead children and have identified over 1000 cases in which this route was used to obtain passports fraudulently in the past. In all more than 120 people have been arrested as a result of this work and the details of the remainder have been circulated to law enforcement agencies at home and abroad.

Illegal Immigrants (Northern Ireland)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal immigrants were detected at Northern Ireland's *(a)* ports and *(b)* airports in the last five years for which figures are available. [150673]

Ms Blears: The number of people against whom illegal entry action was initiated in each of the last five years for which information is available is shown in the table. Information on whether these persons were detected at port or later in-country is unavailable and would be available only by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

Persons against whom illegal entry action was initiated 1998 to 2002

	Number of persons
1998	16,500
1999	21,165
2000	47,325
2001	69,875
2002[1]	48,050

[1] Provisional figures.

Illegal entry action is initiated against those people who are detected entering, or having entered the country clandestinely or by means of deception, either verbal or documentary.

This information and other statistics on the immigration and asylum system are published annually in the Command publication "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom" a copy of which is in the House Library and can be found on the Home Office website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Immigration

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate his Department has made of the number of citizens of EU accession states likely to settle in the UK during the first year of those states' membership. [150081]

Beverley Hughes: Research conducted by University College London for the Home Office, published in June last year ("The impact of EU enlargement on migration flows", Home Office On-Line Report 25/03), estimates that the number of people expected to migrate to the UK from the new member states in the years following enlargement will not be significant. The research corroborates a number of other independent studies, which have been summarised in reports by the European Commission in 2000 and the former Department for Education and Employment in 1999. The estimates for those expected to migrate cover those coming to the UK for at least a year.

We will monitor the situation and the UK has the right to reintroduce restrictions on workers in the event of an unexpected impact on the standard of living or level of employment in a particular region or occupation.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what records will be kept of numbers of citizens of EU accession states entering the UK and intending to settle here after 1 May. [150082]

Beverley Hughes: From accession, nationals from new member states will be EU nationals and will be treated in the same way as current EU/EEA nationals. They will be admitted to the UK on production of a valid passport or identity card.

EU/EEA nationals can obtain settled status (permanent residence) in the UK only by demonstrating that they have been exercising treaty rights for a period of four years and have a residence permit. The Home Office keeps a record of both the number of residence permits granted and those who are granted permanent residence.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was in each of the last five years of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. [147790]

Beverley Hughes: The expenditure of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) excluding capital and cost of capital charges is as follows:

	£ million
1998–99	684
1999–2000	846
2000–01	1,166
2001–02	1,580
2002–03	[1]

[1] The actuals for 2002–03 are yet to be audited and published.

Migrant's Surcharge

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a migrant who applies for a work permit, a study permit and for indefinite leave to remain will be required to incur the migrant's surcharge for each application. [143714]

Beverley Hughes: In line with the current fee structure an applicant who made three separate applications would be charged an additional over cost fee for each individual application.

No decisions have been made regarding the level of any additional fee, this will only be done after wide consultation with other Government Departments and key stakeholders. It is felt that it is only fair that migrants who want to come and live in the UK should make a contribution in return for the considerable benefits they receive.

Open Prisons

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many days prisoners who absconded served at *(a)* Sudbury open prison and *(b)* other open prisons before they absconded in (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04. [148877]

Paul Goggins: The information that the hon. Member has requested on days served before abscond cannot be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the prisoners who absconded from *(a)* Sudbury open prison and *(b)* other open prisons in 2003–04 and who are still unlawfully at large are serving sentences for (i) murder, (ii) grievous bodily harm and (iii) sex offences. [148879]

Paul Goggins: Of those prisoners who have absconded from Sudbury in 2003–04, up to 15 January 2004, one was serving a sentence for murder. None of the remainder were serving sentences for grievous bodily harm or sex offences. The information in respect of other open prisons is not immediately available. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible to provide a full answer.

Passports

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) who will have responsibility for the retention and disposal of passports required to be photocopied by UK carriers abroad; and what assessment he has made of the implications for such a requirement of the Data Protection Act 1998 and EU Directives on data protection; [148390]

(2) if his Department will resist a requirement on UK-registered airlines operating flights to the UK to photocopy passengers' passports; [148391]

(3) if he will list the overseas airports his Department intends to designate as departure points requiring carriers to photocopy passports for passengers travelling to the UK; [148392]

(4) how his Department will consult airline carriers before requiring them to photocopy passports at a foreign airport; [148393]

(5) what plans his Department has to obtain approval and clearance from the relevant foreign government or authority before requiring airlines to photocopy passports for passengers travelling to the UK at airports located in that country; [148394]

(6) what estimate he has made of the *(a)* cost to the airlines of photocopying passports in terms of equipment and staff and *(b)* length of time required to photocopy passports; [148395]

(7) if he will set out the procedures that will apply in the event that passengers refuse to allow their documents to be copied. [148396]

Beverley Hughes: The new clause brought forward by way of Government amendment to the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill will allow an Immigration Officer to require a carrier (UK or overseas based) to provide either a full or partial copy of any document relating to a passenger and containing information about that passenger. A carrier would only have to provide copies of documents on written request. This will help deal with the significant number of asylum seekers who deliberately destroy their travel documents.

Consultation with carriers began on 27 October 2003 and continues through correspondence and meetings. The Home Office has received a range of cost estimates from a number of carriers. There are currently joint discussions over the practical details of a trial to provide a more precise estimate of the costs involved and to test the process.

This power will not be implemented unless the trial has demonstrated that this is practical and cost-effective. This power would not be applied universally but would be deployed on selected routes as and when there was a problem with undocumented arrivals. The power will be capable of being invoked in respect of any ship or aircraft which has arrived/is expected to arrive in the UK or which has departed/is expected to depart from the UK, regardless of which port that ship or aircraft arrived/will arrive at or will depart/has departed from. It is, therefore, not necessary to designate or list departure points for the purposes of the use of the power.

The proposal is for the criminal offence in section 27(b) (iv) of the Immigration Act 1971 to apply in respect of the new power. The offence in section 27(b) (iv) of the Immigration Act 1971 is not committed if the carrier has a "reasonable excuse" for failing to comply with the request. This means that it would be a criminal offence, punishable on summary conviction with a fine of not more than level five on the standard scale or with a maximum of six months imprisonment, or with both, for a carrier to fail to comply with a request to copy documents, without reasonable excuse. It is anticipated that a carrier would decline to carry any passenger who refused to allow their document to be carried.

The Home Office will be responsible for the retention and disposal of any copies. All data processed would be done so in compliance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. The Act imposes a number of obligations on a data controller, one of which pertains to the retention and disposal of data.

Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes will not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.

Foreign governments will be approached only when a need for the power at a specific location has been identified.

Penal Affairs Consortium

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of the Penal Affairs Consortium. [148896]

Paul Goggins: The Penal Affairs Consortium is a body that marshals the views of a wide range of organisations that campaign on criminal justice issues or represent those working in the criminal justice field. We recognise the expertise they have and appreciate the contribution to the debate on penal affairs that they make.

Police Funding

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to *(a)* identify and *(b)* match project-specific funding within each police area in the United Kingdom. [141859]

Ms Blears: We have continued this year with a £20 million Premises Improvement Fund to improve the working conditions police staff by modernising the police estate and communication technology. This year police authorities were able to submit up to two bids, each for a maximum of £0.5 million, and had to match funding from their own resources. Cleveland had one successful bid for £500,000 in matched funding for a range of accommodation improvements across the police estate. We have no plans to identify and match other project-specific funding.

Prisoners on Release

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners in the most recent year for which figures are available, gave no fixed abode as their address; how many convicted paedophiles were released form gaol within this period; and how many convicted paedophiles gave no fixed abode as their address within this period. [149520]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service undertook a large-scale survey in March and April 2003 of sentenced prisoners nearing release. 29 per cent. said they did not have accommodation arranged on release, compared to 33 per cent. in a similar survey undertaken in November and December 2001. These surveys did not look separately at prisoners convicted of sex offences.

The latest Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Annual Reports were published in September 2003. Copies are in the Library. They showed there were 21,413 registered sex offenders in the community. MAPPA provides a framework within which different agencies work together to manage the risks posed by these offenders, including those arising from the absence of stable accommodation. The resettlement of sex offenders posing a serious risk of harm to the public is jointly managed by the police and the National Probation Service within these arrangements.

Provisions in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will formalise this multi-agency engagement by imposing a duty to co-operate with the MAPPA on a number of agencies, including local housing authorities and relevant registered social landlords.

Registered sex offenders are also subject to the notification requirements of the Sex Offenders Act 1997. They are required to provide the police with their home address within three days of their release from prison. Where an offender does not have a home address (which is his sole or main residence in the UK), he is required to provide the police with an address of premises in the UK that he regularly visits.

Prisons (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisons have been closed in Wales since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [150465]

(2) what plans he has to accommodate more youth offenders from Wales in Wales. [150470]

Paul Goggins: No prisons in Wales have closed since 1997. There are no plans, at present, to build any new prisons in Wales, but accommodation requirements will be kept under review.

There are no plans to accommodate more young adult offenders (18 to 20 year olds) from Wales in Wales. The management of juveniles, under 18 years of age, is now the responsibility of the Youth Justice Board. An outline planning application for a site for a new Secure Training Centre (STC) in Wales primarily for vulnerable Welsh juveniles was approved in December 2003. This is subject to final decisions to proceed with the project.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to place police authorities under the control of elected regional assemblies where they are introduced. [152107]

Mr. Raynsford: I have been asked to reply.

The White Paper 'Your Region, Your Choice' sets out the powers of Elected Regional Assemblies. Responsibility for police authorities is not included in the White Paper.

However, in the event of changes in the way central government functions are delivered, section 4.5 of the White Paper states that Government will "build into policy development the new opportunities offered by the creation of elected regional assemblies".

Sex Offenders

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are being explored to make sure that a sexual offender is identified correctly on making his first notification, with particular reference to progress has been made with his plans to use biometric technologies. [149681]

Paul Goggins: Under the Sex Offenders Act 1997 when an offender makes his initial notification, the police may take his photograph and/or his fingerprints to verify the identity of the person making the notification.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003, which re-enacts the 1997 Act with substantial amendments, will allow the police to take photographs of any part of an offender at any notification. This would include a notification by the offender of a change to his details and his annual

notification. The definition of photograph is wide enough to include the use of biometric technologies such as, in the future, iris scanning. The Violent and Sex Offenders Register (ViSOR), currently being developed by the Police and Information Technology Organisation, will have the capacity to store multiple images of individual offenders. These will include facial images and other images such as scars, marks and tattoos. ViSOR, coupled with the new powers in the 2003 Act, will significantly improve the ability of the police to establish the identity of offenders.

The Police and Information Technology Organisation is actively monitoring developments in biometric technology and are associated with a number of research projects focused on the identification of individuals for law enforcement purposes. The Home Office funded a study by the National Physical Laboratory on the use of iris, fingerprint and face biometrics in identity card schemes. The results of this study are on the Home Office website.

Currently, the verification of the identity of individuals against their criminal record is achieved using fingerprints via the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS). The replacement contract for NAFIS is currently under negotiation and it is anticipated that the system architecture will provide a flexible platform to allow other biometric capabilities to be integrated should they be required.

Shoplifting

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women were imprisoned for shoplifting offences in (i) 2001 and (ii) 2002. [143401]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows:

Total persons sentenced and those sentenced to immediate custody for theft from shops, England and Wales, 2001 and 2002

	Male	*Female*
Total persons sentenced		
2001	60,155	19,418
2002	60,074	19,756
Persons sentenced to immediate custody		
2001	12,652	2,397
2002	13,892	2,737
As percentage of total sentenced		
2001	21	12
2002	23	14

It should be noted that courts' sentencing decisions are influenced by the seriousness of the offence and take into account previous convictions.

Speed Camera Convictions

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the number of fines issued from speeding camera convictions in each year since 1997 in Shrewsbury and Atcham was. [151361]

Caroline Flint: The available information on the number of court fines and fixed penalties issued within the police force area of West Mercia for the offence of 'speeding detected by camera' for 1997–2001 is shown in the table. It is not possible from the data collected centrally to identify Shrewsbury and Atcham.

Information for 2002 will be available in the spring.

Fines and fixed penalties data for speeding offences detected by camera[1,2] within West Mercia police force area, 1997–2001

	Total fined at all courts	*Fixed penalty notices issued*
1997	92	—
1998	67	5,500
1999	166	8,800
2000	207	13,800
2001	434	24,400

[1] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999.
[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.

Work Permits

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Department's policy is on awarding United Kingdom work permits to health care professionals; and if he will make a statement. [151610]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 29 January 2004]*: Work Permits are issued to workers from overseas to come to the UK to work in posts where certain published, specified criteria are met.

Healthcare professionals are treated in exactly the same way as other professionals in that they must qualify under these criteria. A number of healthcare posts appear on the Work Permits (UK) shortage occupation list. This allows employers to apply for permits for posts where there is a recognised shortage without the need to undertake a resident labour search.

CABINET OFFICE

Central Sponsor for Information Assurance

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the role of the Central Sponsor for Information Assurance will be when the e-Envoy's responsibilities are re-assigned in accordance with the e-Envoy 2003 report. [151477]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office unit, the Central Sponsor for Information Assurance (CSIA) was created in April 2003. Andrew Finder is the Central Sponsor for Information Assurance in addition to his role as the e-Envoy.

The re-organisation of the e-Envoy under a new Head of e-Government will incorporate the continued role and responsibilities of the Central Sponsor.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much space, expressed in square metres, the Office occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150275]

Mr. Alexander: As of 1 January 2004, the Cabinet Office (including the Government Car and Despatch Agency) is responsible for 61,542m^2 of office space in central London. The Cabinet Office has no space in Greater London.

Civil Service

Mr. Gray: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1014W, on the Civil Service, to whom the Cabinet Secretary, while still a Crown servant, was required to report approaches from external commercial employers; whether, the Cabinet Secretary reported an approach to him during 1997 to join the Advisory Board of IBM UK; to whom the newly retired Cabinet Secretary was required to report offers of employment and consultancy in his retirement in 1998; whether the newly retired Cabinet Secretary reported an offer to join the Advisory Board of IBM UK in 1998; and whether permission for him to take up the appointment was granted by the Prime Minister. [149107]

Mr. Alexander: Decisions on applications under the Business Appointment Rules submitted by serving and former Cabinet Secretaries are for the Prime Minister. The former Cabinet Secretary referred to in the Question submitted an application when in office to take up an appointment with IBM on retirement. On advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, the Prime Minister approved the appointment.

Civil Service (Disabled People)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will set out the number of employees in his Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148996]

Mr. Alexander: The table gives the number of employees in my Department who have a disability broken down by disability type.

Disability type	*Staff number (headcount) as at 1 April 2003*[1]
Reduced Physical Capacity	11
Reduced Physical Capacity + other impairment	[2]
Physical Co-ordination Difficulties	[2]
Hearing Impairment (alone)	6
Hearing Impairment + other impairment	[2]
Learning Difficulties	5
Learning Difficulties + other impairment	[2]
Mental Illness	[2]
Mobility Impairment (alone)	[2]
Mobility Impairment + other impairment	5
Speech Impairment (alone)	[2]
Unknown Disability	[2]
Visual Impairment (alone)	[2]
Total	47

[1] These figures cover the Cabinet Office (main), the Government Car and Despatch Agency (air Executive Agency of the Cabinet Office) and the Central' Office of Information (which reports to the Minister for the Cabinet Office).

[2] Represents figures which are not disclosed to protect the confidentiality of the staff members concerned, i.e. where the figure is less than 5.

Source:

Cabinet Office, Departmental returns

My Department set up a cross-departmental Disability Working Group in January 2003, which is currently working to identify best practice in surveying staff on disability. The group has recently completed a consultation exercise, the outcome of which will be made available in due course.

The Cabinet Office also supports its own departmental network for disabled staff (DISCO) and will be working with them to support a number of initiatives throughout the coming year. This includes awareness raising events about various disabilities.

Consultation

Tim Loughton: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how the recommendations that *(a)* policy makers should ensure that consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible and *(b)* policy makers should give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy, will be enacted in relation to the Draft Mental Health Bill, with reference to the Code of Practice on Government consultations. [151294]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

In line with the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on written consultation, the consultation document and draft Bill were made widely available in hard copy and on the Department of Health and the Stationery Office's websites. Hard copies were sent directly to key stakeholders such as voluntary organisations. Respondents could reply by letter or e-mail.

The Government's response to the consultation will be published prior to a revised and completed draft Bill being considered by a Pre-legislative Scrutiny Committee during this session. This will contain a summary of views expressed and reasons for the policies adopted, as well as the reasons for rejecting options that were not adopted. It will be available in hard copy and on the Department of Health website. At that time, copies of responses will be placed in the Library, except where respondents have asked for confidentiality.

Critical Information Infrastructure

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what steps he has taken to *(a)* identify points of vulnerability of and *(b)* prevent damage to the critical information infrastructure for public sector networks; and if he will make a statement. [151504]

Mr. Alexander: The UK Government have a continuous programme of work that identifies vulnerabilities and prevents damage to the critical national infrastructure, public sector networks and other inter-dependent information systems.

The Central Sponsor for Information Assurance (CSIA) works closely with the National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre (NISCC), who lead in protecting the critical national infrastructure from electronic attack.

The CSIA also works with partners across the public and private sector to assure Government that the risks to the national information infrastructure are appropriately managed.

For security reasons it would not be appropriate to discuss specific vulnerabilities which have been identified, however the CSIA and its partners continue to work with owners of critical national infrastructure to mitigate risks.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what cost savings have been made in the Office since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151041]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office Centre of Excellence was established in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions underpinning the successful delivery of acquisition based programmes and projects.

All Centres of Excellence are currently developing future plans and as part of this process measurement of savings will be defined.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Norman Lamb: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many regulatory impact assessments completed during 2003 resulted in Government Departments deciding not to proceed with new regulations. [149421]

Mr. Alexander: There are no cross-government figures on the number of RIAs that resulted in decisions not to proceed with new regulations. The Government are committed to promoting the use of alternatives to state regulation. As set out in "Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment" departments are required to consider alternatives as part of the RIA process. From this year departments will be required to report on their performance on better regulation in their annual reports, including information on the use of alternatives.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Child Rescue Alert Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend the Child Rescue Alert scheme to Northern Ireland. [150681]

Jane Kennedy: The PSNI are currently examining how best to further develop policy in this area. They currently operate the child safety scheme in conjunction with Tescos and NSPCC and focuses mainly on shopping centres. They have looked at extending this initiative and as part of that research have considered the Child Alert Scheme and the Amber Scheme in the USA. In addition, the PSNI are also assessing a scheme based on phone texting called TEXTUS that could be used to alert all individuals who have a mobile telephone about missing children.

I understand that decisions on the way forward will be reached by the PSNI in the near future.

Child Support

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Child Support Agency cases in Northern Ireland have used the new formula for calculating child maintenance payments in each month since its introduction; and what steps he is taking to increase these figures. [151337]

Mr. Spellar: The Government has sought to reform the child support system to provide prompt, accurate maintenance calculations and quick, reliable maintenance payments. The revised child support scheme, initially delayed from April 2002 to allow further testing of the new IT system, was introduced for new cases on 3 March 2003.

No decision has yet been made as to when cases assessed under the "old" formula, will transfer to the new.

The number of child support cases in Northern Ireland, having used the new formula for calculating child maintenance, each month, since its introduction in March 2003, is as follows:

	Assessment calculated under new formula
March to July[1]	344
August 2003	226
September 2003	370
October 2003	427
November 2003	380
December 2003	228
January[2]	132
Total	2,107

[1] Only year to date information is available up to July 2003.
[2] As at 27 January 2004.

Between 3 March 2003 and 17 January 2004, the Agency has dealt with 66 per cent. of the new applications received and case clearances are currently on par with intake. The current number of outstanding applications is 2,899.

To further reduce the number of outstanding new scheme applications, 10 additional staff are currently undergoing training. They will be fully effective by 31 March 2004.

Civil Service Code

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether, when in May 2001 an employee of the Department of Education in Northern Ireland was found to have harassed a colleague and subjected to a disciplinary charge, that employee was, in accordance with the Pay and Conditions of Service Code of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, provided with the detail of the case. [150427]

Jane Kennedy: In line with the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay and Conditions of Service Code and the Department of Education's policy on Harassment and Bullying, the individual was provided with the detail of the case.

Disability Discrimination Act

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in Northern Ireland. [142686]

Mr. Spellar: Most provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) have been implemented in Northern Ireland. The final provisions of part III of the DDA concerning the rights of access to goods, facilities, services and premises will be implemented in October 2004 when service providers may have to make 'reasonable adjustments' in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

Part V of the DDA allows for accessibility standards to be set for public transport. Beginning in March/April 2004, the Department of the Environment expects to consult on proposals to implement the UK Government's commitment on making (public hire) taxis accessible to disabled people. Draft measures will have regard to taxi accessibility proposals announced for England and Wales in October 2003 and will form part of a wide range of measures to reform taxi regulation emerging from the on-going NI Review of Taxi Regulation.

Under section 37 of DDA, the Department of the Environment introduced regulations on 1 August 2001 imposing on licensed drivers of public hire taxis a duty to carry without charge a guide dog, hearing dog or other prescribed category of dog when it accompanies the hirer. The provision also provides that such a driver may be exempted from this obligation on medical grounds. It is the Department's intention to extend similar provisions under section 37A to licensed drivers of private hire vehicles in mid 2004.

The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (NI) 2003 came into operation on 30 April 2003. The regulations are intended to ensure that disabled people can get on and off buses and coaches in safety and without unreasonable difficulty, and in the case of wheelchair users, can do so while remaining in their wheelchairs. They are also intended to ensure that disabled people are carried in these vehicles in safety and in reasonable comfort e.g., they provide for wheelchair spaces, boarding lifts and ramps, suitable entrances and exits, handrails and kneeling systems.

The Department for Regional Development made Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (Northern Ireland) on 2 July 2001. All new trains, including the 23 currently being built for Northern Ireland Railways, must comply with these regulations

Disabled Persons (Transport)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to improve access to trains for disabled persons in Northern Ireland. [151180]

Mr. Spellar: The 23 new trains currently being built for Translink will comply with the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (NI) 2001. These trains will replace Translink's existing slam door Class 80 trains and will provide much easier access for wheelchair users. The remainder of Translink's fleet, its Castle Class and Enterprise trains, have automatic doors, which facilitate access by wheelchair users. Translink advise that all main stations provide access to trains by wheelchair users.

Driving Disqualifications

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals were disqualified from driving in each of the last 10 years. [151223]

Jane Kennedy: The information is set out in the table. Information for subsequent years is not yet available.

	Number of disqualifications
1993	2,692
1994	2,649
1995	2,398
1996	1,988
1997	1,943
1998	2,247
1999	2,665
2000	2,583
2001	2,203

Estate Agents (Intimidation)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of estate agents who have been subject to violent threats to deter their provision of services and letting of properties to members of ethnic minority groups; and what steps have been taken by the police to *(a)* identify and *(b)* prosecute those responsible. [151140]

Jane Kennedy: In recent weeks the media reported that an estate agent in the Donegal Road area of Belfast had suffered intimidation from unknown persons who attempted to deter him from offering his services and letting property to members of ethnic minority groups, however no complaint has been made to the police in South Belfast by any estate agent.

As a result of these media reports, police officers contacted estate agents in the Donegal Road Area that let property about these allegations; however no estate agents subsequently reported any form of intimidation against them concerning their letting practices.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients are awaiting *(a)* in-patient admission and *(b)* initial out-patient assessment for orthopaedic surgery. [152363]

Angela Smith: Waiting list statistics are submitted to the Department at specialty level. The information in this answer relates to people waiting in the trauma and orthopaedics specialty. The latest available waiting list figures show the position at 30 September 2003, when

(a) there were 6,253 patients awaiting admission to hospital in the trauma and orthopaedics surgery specialty.

(b) there were 19,619 patients awaiting a first out-patient appointment in the trauma and orthopaedics surgery specialty.

Mobile Classrooms

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many schools in each Northern Ireland constituency make use of temporary mobile classroom accommodation; and what the forecast average time is for the replacement of this accommodation. [150676]

Jane Kennedy: The Department of Education is currently working with the Education and Library Boards and other school authorities to update the information held on the number of temporary classrooms in the school estate. This information will be supplied to you when the results of the survey are available.

There is no average replacement time forecast for temporary accommodation. It is replaced based on the educational need and the resources available. Through the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative, £15 million was made available over the past two years specifically to remove temporary classrooms from 52 schools. Over the next two years, a further £16 million will be made available for this purpose. In addition, over the past four years major capital projects totalling some £650 million have been announced and this investment will also contribute to further reductions in temporary accommodation as these schemes come to fruition in the coming years.

Olympic Games

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of whether Windsor Park Football Ground would be suitable to host Olympic games fixtures in the event of London hosting the games in 2012; and if he will make a statement. [152360]

Angela Smith: The London 2012 Olympic bid team included Windsor Park as a proposed venue for preliminary rounds of the Olympic football tournament, should the London bid be successful. It is recognised that Windsor Park would require substantial upgrading if it is to host such fixtures but this can be assessed in detail when the outcome of the bid is known and in the context of the outcomes of a study now being commissioned to establish if a National Stadium in Northern Ireland is a viable option.

Parades Commission

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the future of the Northern Ireland Parades Commission. [151221]

Jane Kennedy: The Government have been considering the responses received so far as a result of the public consultation exercise in relation to the Quigley Report. The door remains open for any further responses. However, in the interim, the tenure of the serving Chairman and members of the Parades Commission has been extended to 31 December 2005.

Paramilitary Activities

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many paramilitary attacks on individuals in Northern Ireland there have been in each of the last five years. [148842]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is set out in the following table.

Financial year	*By Loyalist*	*By Republican*	*Total*
(a) Number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults[1]			
1998–99	112	60	172
1999–2000	70	33	103
2000–01	89	72	161
2001–02	76	36	112
2002–03	94	50	144
(b) Number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings			
1998–99	40	33	73
1999–2000	53	22	75
2000–01	99	63	162
2001–02	124	66	190
2002–03	110	55	165
(c) Total number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults and shootings			
1998–99	152	93	245
1999–2000	123	55	178
2000–01	188	135	323
2001–02	200	102	302
2002–03	204	105	309

[1] Beatings

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in prosecuting *(a)* loyalist and *(b)* republican paramilitaries who have carried out punishment beatings and shootings. [148982]

Jane Kennedy: It is not possible to provide details of the number of persons arrested or charged for such offences as the offences which they have been charged with are defined as assault occasioning actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm. Police statistics do not identify whether such crimes were the result of paramilitary attacks. Police investigations into these crimes are often hampered by the victims' reluctance to co-operate with them.

Pension Credit

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time taken to process each pension credit application was in 2003; and how many applications remain to be processed. [152127]

Mr. Spellar: The average time taken to process new Pension Credit applications in 2003 was 30 days.

On average about 350 new applications are received each week and there are currently 4,200 applications still to be processed. All applications made up to October 2004 will be backdated to 6 October 2003.

There are also about 900 Minimum Income Guarantee claims (made between October and December 2003 where entitlement began prior to 6 October 2003) still to be processed. These should be cleared by March 2004.

Following the launch of Pension Credit in October there has been a tremendous response from pensioners and their representatives both in terms of enquiries and pensions credit applications. It has taken longer than anticipated to process the applications.

However, firm plans are in place, additional staff are being trained and the situation will improve significantly over the coming months.

Police (Assaults)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attacks on police officers there were in each of the last 10 years. [151209]

Jane Kennedy: The information is set out in the following table.

Number of attacks on Police in Northern Ireland

	Missile attacks[1]	*Other attacks*	*Total*
1994	102	176	278
1995	371	129	500
1996	1,322	208	1,530
1997	1,011	229	1,240
1998	1,422	384	1,806
1999	1,028	210	1,238
2000	1,119	254	1,373
2001	1,663	332	1,995
2002	1,654	108	1,762
2003[2]	1,155	13	1,168

[1] Missile attacks relate to the throwing of an object such as a bottle, brick, or stone.

[2] 2003 figures are provisional and subject to minor amendment.

Prison Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much it has cost the Prison Service to fly the *(a)* Director General and *(b)* Director of Operations of the Northern Ireland Prison Service in and out of the Province since their appointments; and how many flights have been taken. [146175]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Director General and the Director of Operations of the Northern Ireland Prison Service are both entitled to one return flight per week as part of their employment contracts. Both avail themselves of approximately 46 flights per year. The average cost of a return flight for the Director General is £224 and £290 for the Director of Operations.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who the members of the *(a)* Fair Employment Commission, *(b)* Industrial Development Board, *(c)* Tourist Board (Northern Ireland) and *(d)* Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151408]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The most recently published information on members of the Boards of public bodies, their term of office and remuneration is contained in the Public Appointments Annual Report. A copy of the latest report (covering the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003) is available from the Library of the House and on the internet at: www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/publicappointments

The Industrial Development Board was subsumed into Invest Northern Ireland with effect from 1 April 2002. With effect from 1 October 1999, the Fair Employment Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission were replaced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, which is not a public body of the Devolved Administration.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who the members of the *(a)* Industrial Tribunals Northern Ireland, *(b)* Health and Safety Agency for Northern Ireland, *(c)* Labour Relations Agency, *(d)* Fair Employment Tribunal and *(e)* Economic Council were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151449]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The most recently published information on members of the Boards of public bodies, their term of office and remuneration is contained in the Public Appointments Annual Report. A copy of the latest report (covering the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003) is available from the Library of the House and on the internet at: www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/publicappointments

The Health and Safety Agency became the Health and Safety Executive with effect from 1 April 1999.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) who the members of the *(a)* Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland, *(b)* Statute Law Committee, *(c)* Belfast Education and Library Board, *(d)* North Eastern Education and Library Board and *(e)* South Eastern Education and Library Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is; [151450]

(2) who the members of the *(a)* Western Health and Social Services Council, *(b)* Down Lisburn Health and Social Services Trust, *(c)* North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, *(d)* South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust and *(e)* Distinction and Meritorious Service Awards Committee were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is; [151452]

(3) who the members of the *(a)* Charities Advisory Committee, *(b)* Health Promotion Agency, *(c)* Mental Health Commission, *(d)* Fire Authority for Northern Ireland and *(e)* Local Government Staff Commission were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151453]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The most recently published information on members of the Boards of public bodies, their term of office and remuneration is contained in the Public Appointments Annual Report. A copy of the latest report (covering the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003) is available from the Library of the House and on the internet at: www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/publicappointments

The salaries of the Chairpersons of Education and Library Boards were reviewed in August 2003 and were increased to £10,000 per annum with effect from 1 April 2002.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who the members of the *(a)* Southern Education and Library Board, *(b)* Western Education and Library Board, *(c)* Northern Ireland Museums Council, *(d)* Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and *(e)* Eastern Health and Social Services Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151451]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The most recently published information on members of the Boards of public bodies, their term of office and remuneration is contained in the Public Appointments Annual Report. A copy of the latest report (covering the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003) is available from the Library of the House and on the internet at: www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/publicappointments

The salaries of the Chairpersons of Education and Library Boards were reviewed in August 2003 and were increased to £10,000 per annum with effect from 1 April 2002.

The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum became part of National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland with effect from 1 April 1998.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who the members of the *(a)* Rent Assessment Panel, *(b)* Northern Ireland Housing Executive, *(c)* Laganside Corporation, *(d)* Advisory Committee on Travellers and *(e)* Planning Appeals Committee were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151454]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The most recently published information on members of the Boards of public bodies, their term of office and remuneration is contained in the Public Appointments Annual Report. A copy of the latest report (covering the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003) is available from the Library of the House and on the internet at: www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/publicappointments

The Advisory Committee on Travellers was not re-appointed when its term of office expired on 31 December 1999.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who the members of the *(a)* Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland, *(b)* Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland, *(c)* Fisheries Conservancy Board for Northern Ireland, *(d)* Fishery Authority for Northern Ireland and *(e)* Industrial Research and Technology Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151455]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The most recently published information on members of the Boards of public bodies, their term of office and remuneration is contained in the Public Appointments Annual Report. A copy of the latest report (covering the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003) is available from the Library of the House and on the internet at: www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/publicappointments

The Industrial Research and Technology Board was subsumed into Invest Northern Ireland with effect from 1 April 2002. The Fishery Authority for Northern Ireland is more commonly known as the Fishery Harbour Authority for Northern Ireland.

Schools (Bullying)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children have had to move schools as a result of bullying in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* North Down in each of the past five years; and what steps he is taking to reduce these figures. [150677]

Jane Kennedy: The Department of Education does not collect information about the number of pupils who move schools as a result of bullying. Parents move their children from one school to another for a variety of reasons, which may include alleged bullying. However, there is no requirement for parents to advise any statutory agency of the reasons for the move. The Department recognises that bullying in whatever form and for whatever reason, have no place in schools. The Department has issued comprehensive guidance to all schools about how to tackle bullying. Further, the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003, which came into operation on 1 April 2003, places a duty on all grant-aided schools to have an anti-bullying policy and to draw up measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

Airport/Port Security

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the current security arrangements at Northern Ireland's ports and airports. [150460]

Jane Kennedy: A number of agencies work together, each with specific roles that contribute to the overall security at ports and airports. Security regimes are routinely inspected by the appropriate regulatory body to ensure that operating authorities comply with the requirements placed upon them.

Solectron

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with *(a)* Invest Northern Ireland and *(b)* NORTEL Northern Ireland on the future of Solectron Carrickfergus. [151002]

Mr. Pearson: I have discussed the future of Solectron with Invest NI. In addition in November 2003, I met with senior Nortel executives in Montreal and Ottawa, Canada, to discuss future business issues. I also met Nortel's Northern Ireland Management on 2 February 2004. Invest NI continues to maintain contact with senior Solectron executives in Europe and the United States.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148629]

Mr. Pearson: The information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Burglary

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance is given on *(a)* whether bail should be granted following a

charge of house burglary and *(b)* the level of sentencing appropriate following a conviction for house burglary. [152118]

Mr. Leslie: The judiciary in both the Crown and magistrates court will apply any case law and relevant court of appeal judgments when making decisions on bail and sentence. Guidelines for sentencing in dwelling house burglary cases were laid out by the Lord Chief Justice in a 2002 judgment.

All magistrates receive training on the law in relation to bail and sentencing organised by the 42 independent Magistrates Courts Committees. In addition, they are issued with an Adult Court Bench Book, published by the Judicial Studies Board. This bench book includes a structured decision-making guide for use when making both bail and sentencing decisions. It also contains copies of both the National Mode of Trial Guidelines issued by the Lord Chief Justice as part of the Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction and the newly revised Magistrates Court Sentencing Guidelines. Both of these documents provide guidance in relation to dwelling house burglaries. The Adult Court Bench Book is publicly available through the website www.jsboard.co.uk.

Consultations

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list those individuals and organisations *(a)* to whom (i) his Department, (ii) its executive agencies and (iii) the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultations (A) Combining English local authority, Greater London Authority and European Parliament elections: a consultation paper, (B) Modernising the civil courts: a consultation paper and (C) Constitutional reform: next steps for the House of Lords and *(b)* from who each received a response in each case. [151651]

Mr. Leslie: These consultation papers, as is routine with Government consultation, were published on the Department's websites. They were each distributed to a wide number of consultees, and each received a significant number of detailed responses.

I have placed a list of consultees and respondents to the "Combining English local authority, Greater London Authority and European Parliament elections" and "Modernising the Civil Courts" consultation papers in the Library of the House.

222 people responded to the consultation paper "Constitutional reform: next steps for the House of Lords". The consultation paper was sent to all those referred to in annex B of the paper, and others as requested. A summary of responses to the consultation will be published shortly, along with legislation to give effect to the Government's proposals.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he will reply to the letter of 29 August 2003 from the hon. Member for Northavon, forwarded to him by the Department for Work and Pensions, reference 142208, regarding Mr. Dicker. [151710]

Mr. Lammy: I wrote to the hon. Member for Northavon on 26 October 2003 in response to his letter of 29 August. I apologise that the hon. Member does not appear to have received the letter of 26 October. A further copy has been forwarded to the hon. Member.

Decennial Records

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1112W, on the 1911 Census, if the Lord Chancellor will amend Instrument No.12 (1966) to reduce the period of closure of decennial records to 50 years. [150830]

Mr. Leslie: The Lord Chancellor has not given consideration to amending Instrument No. 12 to reduce the closure period of decennial census records to 50 years.

Judicial Appointments Commission

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he last met the Lord Chief Justice to discuss his proposals to create a Judicial Appointments Commission. [151658]

Mr. Leslie: The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice regularly discuss judicial issues and constitutional reform.

They last met to discuss the Judicial Appointments Commission on 18 December 2003. Subsequent to this meeting, they have also had several telephone conversations to discuss the proposals to create a Judicial Appointments Commission.

Mr. Balwant Singh

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the letter sent by the hon. Member for Leicester, East to Miss Fitzmaurice on 2 December 2003, what progress has been made in finding the file of Mr. Balwant Singh. [151575]

Mr. Lammy: This appeal has not been received by the Immigration Appellate Authority. The British High Commission in New Delhi are responsible for forwarding the appeal papers to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of the Home Office (IND). Checks with IND have confirmed that no papers have been received pertaining to the appeal of a Mr. Balwant Singh.

Mr. Philip Brown

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs for what reason Mr. Philip Brown of Llandrindod Wells, reference CSCU 121/03, was refused a refund of the fee charged to gain Power of Attorney for his late mother. [151246]

Mr. Lammy: Mr. Brown paid a fee to the Court of Protection for an application to register an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA).

The application was received on 25 March 2003. Mrs. Brown unfortunately died on 27 April 2003 while the court waited for the statutory 35 day waiting period following notification of relatives of the application to expire before issuing the Enduring Power sealed by the court.

EPA fees are payable under Rule 26 of the Court of Protection (Enduring Powers of Attorney) Rules 2001. The court has set guidelines for the remission of fees, to ensure that cases are with consistently.

According to these guidelines, a registration fee will be remitted if the donor of the EPA dies within five working days of the application. This is because most of the administrative work generated by an application to register an EPA is done within the first few days of the application.

Public Defender System

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to extend the public defender system. [151774]

Mr. Lammy: In order to better assess the performance of the PDS, the LSC, with the agreement of Ministers, increased the number of PDS offices from six to eight in 2003. Ministers will make a decision on the future of the PDS in the light of the research at the end of 2005. There are no current plans to open further offices but the Government and the LSC have always said that the PDS provides a flexible option to deliver criminal defence services, for example, where existing provision is low, or of poor quality.

Trials

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures he is taking to deal with the problems caused by *(a)* ineffective and *(b)* cracked trials. [151777]

Mr. Leslie: My Department, in conjunction with other criminal justice agencies, is actively addressing the problems of ineffective and cracked trials. The CJS PSA2 seeks to bring 1.2 million offenders to justice by 2006 and to reduce the proportion of ineffective trials. My Department aims to cut the ineffective rate in the crown court from 24 per cent. to 17 per cent. and in the magistrates court from 31 per cent. to 23 per cent. To monitor progress, interim targets have been set for April 2004 of 20.4 per cent. in crown court and 26.5 per cent. in the magistrates court. Following changes to a more victim and witness focused listing system with greater emphasis on trials being effective, over-listing in the crown court has reduced and the ineffective rate has reduced to 19.7 per cent. over the last quarter. Progress in the magistrates court has been slower, which reflects the more diverse nature of the business, but is now achieving a rate of 28.8 per cent. New targets to lower the rate further in 2004–05 are currently being agreed.

My Department is working with the Home Office, the CPS and the judiciary to address the problems of cracked trials in a number of ways. The most important of these is the tri-lateral Effective Trial Management Programme, which will introduce a Criminal Case Management Framework, which clearly sets out the procedure to be followed in each type of case. This framework will be supported by a new soon to be established Criminal Procedure Rule Committee.

There will also be provision for judges and magistrates to give an early indication of sentence. These measures, coupled with the CPS taking responsibility for charging and the work being done to support witnesses, will reduce the number of cracked trials and those where the prosecution ends the case or offers no evidence. My Department has an effective performance management system in place which will ensure that the proportion of cracked and ineffective trials will reduce and is currently appointing Case Progression Officers to each area to work closely with other agencies to ensure greater certainty that cases listed proceed as planned.

PRIME MINISTER

Egypt

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister when he plans to make an official visit to Egypt; and what plans he has to invite President Mubarak to the UK on an official visit. [152612]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so.

European Constitution

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister what the current status of Britain's red line issues on the European constitution is; whether the British view on those issues was accepted by the Inter-governmental Conference; and whether the issues have to be re-opened. [150199]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave in my Statement on the European Council to the right hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), on 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1323, and the right hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory), on 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1327.

Hutton Report

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister when the Government intends to address the criticism contained in the Hutton Report. [152678]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to my statement of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 337–43.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make an exception to the usual rule on the non-disclosure of information on Cabinet Committee proceedings in the case of consideration of policy towards Iraq as discussed in the Defence and Overseas Policy Sub-committee. [151971]

The Prime Minister: No. It is established practice under Exemption 2 of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information not to disclose information relating to the proceedings of the Cabinet and its committees.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to offer technical and logistical support to enable the Iraqi Governing Council to organise free and fair elections. [152161]

The Prime Minister: The UN Secretary-General announced on 26 January that, once satisfied about the security arrangements, he would send a technical team to Iraq to look at the feasibility of holding elections before 30 June.

The Government welcomes the news and, once we have seen the team's recommendations, we will consider any requests for assistance.

We have also told the Iraqi Governing Council that we are ready to assist the Transitional Government, where necessary, with the constitution and elections processes envisaged for 2005.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what the sources were of information on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programme brought to his attention in the summer of 2002, referred to in his oral evidence to the Hutton Inquiry. [152313]

The Prime Minister: I received information from a variety of sources, including intelligence reports and assessments.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister (1) whether he authorised his former Director of Communications to press the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee to revise the nuclear weapons time-line during the revision of the draft dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction in September 2002; [152315]

(2) who authorised his former director of communications to press the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee to alter the nuclear weapons time-line in the draft of the dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction from the statement that nuclear weapons could be produced in at least two years, to the statement that nuclear weapons could be produced in between one and two years, as indicated in Mr. Alastair Campbell's e-mail of 19 September 2002 to the Joint Intelligence Committee chairman, submitted by the Prime Minister's office to the Hutton Inquiry as document CAB/11/0091–0092. [152533]

The Prime Minister: Lord Hutton found in his report that

> "Mr Scarlett accepted some of the drafting suggestions made to him by 10 Downing Street but he only accepted those suggestions which were consistent with the intelligence known to the JIC and he rejected those suggestions which were not consistent with such intelligence and the dossier issued by the Government was approved by the JIC". (HC 247 paragraph 228).

Iraq Survey Group

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer to the right hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 305, on the Iraq Survey Group report, when the evidence was published; where it was published; and if he will place the full interim Iraq Survey Group report in the Library. [152674]

The Prime Minister: The leader of the Iraq Survey Group, Dr. David Kay, presented an unclassified summary report to the US authorities on 2 October 2003, copies of which are available in the Library of the House. This summary report contains numerous references to a clandestine network of laboratories in Iraq.

The full report, which was shared in confidence with other principal coalition partners, contains detailed and operationally sensitive information and is highly classified. It has been the practice of successive Governments not to give information on intelligence and security matters, under exemption 1 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

Lord Birt

Paul Flynn: To ask the Prime Minister on what subjects he has received reports from Lord Birt in each of the last two years; and what subjects will be considered by Lord Birt in the future. [151975]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) on 11 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 215W.

Normandy Veterans

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Prime Minister whether he plans to attend the Normandy Veterans' 60th Anniversary Service at St. Paul's Cathedral. [149930]

The Prime Minister: The commemorative service to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings is being organised by the Normandy Veterans Association and is due to take place on 20 October 2004. The Government will be providing assistance for this service and are likely to be represented. Precise arrangements have yet to be finalised.

Her Majesty the Queen and I have accepted President Chirac's invitation to lead the United Kingdom's participation in the commemorations in France in June.

Political Parties (Ireland)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his discussions with the Irish Government on criminal activities funding political parties. [150762]

The Prime Minister: The two Governments regularly discuss combating the criminal activities of paramilitary organisations. The detail of these discussions is confidential.

The mechanisms for funding political parties in Northern Ireland is currently under review and a Parliamentary announcement will be made shortly.

Religious Symbols (French Schools)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the consequences of the proposed banning of religious symbols in schools in France upon European integration. [151038]

The Prime Minister: None, since religion, and its structure and organisation in EU member states, are explicitly not an area of European Union activity. This

is entirely a matter for individual countries to decide. In Britain we are comfortable with the expression of religion, which is part of our multicultural tradition.

Travellers

Andrew Selous: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 813, to the hon. Member for Billericay (Mr. Baron), if he will ensure that the enforcement of planning law in relation to travellers referred to is included in the Planning Bill; and if he will agree to meet the hon. Members for Billericay and South-West Bedfordshire and other concerned hon. Members on this subject. [149851]

The Prime Minister: The planning system is complex and the issues raised are complicated and wide-ranging. We are continuing to assess the issue of strengthening enforcement in respect of breaches of planning control and to consider whether any new powers are needed in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill.

I am aware that Planning Ministers have already met the hon. Member and other hon. Members on this issue and would be happy to meet them again as new issues arise.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions the additional powers which provide the authority for his Department to supply information which related to benefit fraud and error to countries outside the UK introduced by the Social Security Fraud Act 2001 have been used in each year since the powers took effect; and if he will list *(a)* the countries involved and *(b)* the action that resulted in each of the cases involved. [151023]

Mr. Pond: There are no occasions on which these additional powers have been used.

Section 5 of the Social Security Fraud Act 2001 provides for an exchange of information with overseas authorities provided similar legislation has been enacted by that country and that the data handling expertise of the receiving country meets the provision on privacy set out the European Convention of Human Rights.

We have signed an agreement with the Republic of Ireland and will sign an agreement with the Netherlands in the near future that will allow the exchange of information envisaged by Section 5. Although no other agreements have been made at present we have had informal discussions with Germany, France and Spain and have the intention of making agreements across Europe where there is benefit in doing so.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions the additional powers to reduce or withdraw benefits where an offender is convicted twice of benefit offences within a period of three years introduced by the Social Security Fraud Act 2001 have been used in each year since the powers took effect. [151024]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested as information is not held on a year by year basis.

To date, 26 people have been convicted of benefit fraud against the Department on two or more occasions. Sanctions have been applied to 11 of these cases, five of which have had their benefit reduced, and a further six have had their benefit withdrawn. A further 12 individuals are not currently in receipt of benefit. Additionally, a further three individuals are due to have their benefits withdrawn after the appeal period allowed has lapsed.

Disability Benefits

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of those registered disabled *(a)* adult and *(b)* children received (i) Incapacity Benefit, (ii) Disability Living Allowance and (iii) Attendance Allowance in each local authority ward, listed in descending order in the counties of *(a)* Denbighshire and *(b)* Conwy for the latest year in which figures are available. [147701]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability. Since its introduction, disabled people no longer register as disabled. Information regarding numbers of people in receipt of these benefits in each local authority ward in the counties of Denbighshire and Conwy has been placed in the Library.

HSE (Fuel Leakages)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many leakages from underground fuel tanks were reported to the Health and Safety Executive in the last five years. [150052]

Mr. Browne: The Health and Safety Executive does not collect statistics specifically on the number of leakages from underground fuel tanks.

Learning Disabilities

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures are taken to ensure that those clients with learning disabilities are not penalised for earning below the £20 limit. [151306]

Maria Eagle: For people claiming Income Support, earnings are normally taken fully into account when deciding how much benefit can be paid. However, for certain vulnerable groups, including those receiving long term incapacity benefits, we have introduced an earnings disregard of £20; this allows a person to earn up to and including £20 without their benefit entitlement being affected.

Anybody in receipt of Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance, including people with learning disabilities, can earn up to and including £20 a week for an unlimited period without affecting their benefit.

We do not believe these arrangements penalise those with learning disabilities, and we have no plans to change them at present.

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) his Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147983]

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [151580]

Maria Eagle: The Department's records show that the number of passes reported by staff as having been lost in the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003 is 352, and the number of passes reported by staff as having been stolen in the same period is one. The records do not distinguish between reports received from staff in the Department and agency staff.

Training Courses

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how long an individual must be unemployed before becoming eligible for training courses offered by his Department and its agencies. [147513]

Mr. Browne: Training for unemployed people is available through a range of Jobcentre Plus programmes including Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA), the New Deals, Employment Zones, Action Teams and our Ambition programmes. The provision of our training courses is targeted at those who will benefit the most from them.

Eligibility for these programmes, and specifically the period of time people are required to be unemployed before becoming eligible, depends on the particular circumstances of each individual customer. People known to face particular disadvantage in the labour market may be exempt from an unemployment qualifying period, and can join Jobcentre Plus programmes from day one of their unemployment. These can include: disabled people, lone parents and people with basic skills needs.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

High Hedges

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list those individuals and organisations *(a)* to whom (i) his Department, (ii) its executive agencies and (iii) the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultation, 'Hedge height and light loss' and *(b)* from whom each received a response. [151650]

Yvette Cooper: 'High hedges and light loss' was produced under contract by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) for the Department. Consultation on the draft version of this guidance was not carried out either by the Department, its executive agencies or a non-departmental public body. BRE sent out copies of 'Hedge height and light loss' for consultation (either electronically or on paper) to the organisations listed as follows. It was also published on the Department's website in April 2001. Those organisations marked with an asterisk submitted detailed responses to consultation, as did a number of individuals (15), mainly people whose houses and gardens were overshadowed by hedges.

The report 'High hedges, daylight and sunlight', also prepared by BRE, explains how the guidance was developed and modified in the light of the consultation responses. Copies of 'Hedge height and light loss' and 'High hedges, daylight and sunlight' are on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: www.odpm.gov.uk/treesandhedges and are available in the Libraries of the House.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will shortly be consulting on regulations under the Anti-social Behaviour Act relating to high hedges.

Arboricultural Association
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers
Cornwall County Council
Delva Patman Associates
East Dorset District Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Gardening Which?
Hedgeline
Horticultural Trades Association
Islington London Borough Council
Kent County Council
Landscape Institute
Local Government Association
London Borough of Bromley
Mediation UK
National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
National Association of Tree Officers
North West Tree Officers Group
Poole Borough Council
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Royal Horticultural Society
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Royal Town Planning Institute
Tendring District Council
Thames Valley Tree Officers Forum
The London Tree Officers' Association
Town and Country Planning Association
Westminster City Council.

Accommodation

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many households containing children or pregnant women were placed in bed and breakfast accommodation *(a)* in total and *(b)* by social services departments under legislation other than the Housing Act 1996 and are as a consequence not included in the provisions of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 in each of the last five years; [152331]

(2) how many households containing children or pregnant women were placed by local authorities in non-self-contained accommodation which is excluded from the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 as a result of the fact that the relevant buildings are owned or managed by a local housing authority, a registered social landlord or a voluntary organisation in each of the last five years. [152332]

Yvette Cooper: Information distinguishing the number of households with dependent children or expectant mothers being accommodated in various types of temporary accommodation has only been collected since March 2002. Estimates of such households accommodated in bed and breakfast style units, other forms of shared-facility accommodation, hostels and women's refuges at the end of each quarter are presented in the table. Ownership of these units is not identified, although most B&B and shared-facility units will be privately owned.

Information about placements of families into bed and breakfast accommodation by social services departments is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Homeless families with children or an expectant mother accommodated by local authorities[1] in non self-contained dwellings as at the end of each quarter: England

	Bed and breakfast	*Other privately owned shared-facility units*	*Hostels*	*Women's refuges*	*Total*
2002					
March	6,180	550	3,640	530	10,900
June	6,230	440	4,650	650	11,970
September	5,580	650	5,260	750	12,240
December	4,530	470	4,500	570	10,070
2003					
March	4,470	340	4,980	720	10,510
June	3,420	290	5,140	750	9,600
September	3,090	100	5,390	750	9,330

[1] Homeless households accommodated under the Housing Act 1996

Source:
ODPM PIE housing activity returns (quarterly)

Area-based Initiatives

Matthew Green: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the area-based initiatives which receive funding from his Department; what the total budget is for each; and what amount each received from his Department in this financial year. [150100]

Yvette Cooper: The information is as follows:

£ million

ODPM funded initiatives	Total ODPM funding	2003–04 Budget allocation
Coalfields	[1]57.30	22.00
Community Chests	100.00	25.00
European Regional Development Fund Areas	[1]672.07	230.53
Market Renewal Pathfinders	500.00	61.20
Neighbourhood Management	91.00	23.00
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	2,019.00	400.00
Neighbourhood Wardens/Street Wardens	45.50	10.00
New Deal for Communities	1,440.00	265.00
Total	4,924.87	1,036.73

[1] SR02 allocation

Other area-based initiatives:

Single Regeneration Budget

In 2001, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) was subsumed into the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) Single Programme ('Single Pot') from which RDAs will continue to fund existing SRB commitments. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's contribution to the RDAs Single Pot is £4,679 million for 2003–06 and £1,523.7 million for 2003–04.

Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs)

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not directly fund URCs as funding is channelled through non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and other delivery agents.

Other initiatives

Liveability Fund is a pilot scheme working with 27 local authorities giving capital reward grants in return for agreed service improvements in management and maintenance of public spaces and does not focus on specific areas. Total funding for the scheme is £89 million, £7 million of which is budgeted for 2003–04.

Armed Forces (Council Tax)

Mr. Key: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in what circumstances private homes owned by Her Majesty's forces qualify for a council tax discount. [151646]

Mr. Raynsford: Private homes owned by Her Majesty's forces will qualify for council tax discounts in the same way as private homes owned by anyone else. For example, there will be a 25 per cent. discount if it is the taxpayer's sole or main residence and the taxpayer lives by themselves, or if they share with a full time student. If the taxpayer has two private homes, the second home will be subject to a discount. The amount of that discount can be anything from 10 per cent. to 50 per cent., depending on whether the billing authority has passed a resolution to reduce the statutory discount of 50 per cent. The power to reduce that discount came into force on 18 December 2003 for the financial year 2004–05 onwards. In addition, billing authorities now have the power to reduce the amount of council tax which a person is liable to pay in respect of a dwelling. Billing authorities therefore have discretion in effect to grant additional local discounts.

Construction Skills Certificates

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Construction Skills Certification Scheme cards are *(a)* in circulation and *(b)* due for renewal in 2005; and what estimate his Department has made of the numbers likely to seek to renew. [152167]

Nigel Griffiths: I have been asked to reply.

The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) is owned and managed by CSCS Ltd and administered on their behalf by CITB-Constructionskills.

No estimate has been made of the number likely to seek to renew.

CITB-ConstructionSkills advise that as at 31 December 2003, there were 581,683 (including Affiliates) cards in circulation.

CITB-Constructionskills advise that in the year 2000, 20,000 cards (excluding affiliates) were issued and with each card lasting five years, one would assume this number would be due for renewal in 2005.

Council Tax

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what basis the calculation in Cm 3897, page 81, paragraph 6.33 was made that a Band D council tax payer would pay an extra three pence on his or her council tax bill to contribute to the costs of the Mayor, Assembly and new central services; and what the current precept for Band D council tax payers is. [152261]

Mr. Raynsford: The calculation in Cm 3897 was based on an initial Government estimate of the cost of the Mayor, Assembly and central services before their creation. It is for the Mayor to determine the level of Greater London Authority (GLA) precept. In 2003–04 the total GLA precept for a Band D council taxpayer is £4.31 per week outside the City of London and £1.25 per week in the City of London. Approximately 13.6p a week of this is for the Mayor, Assembly and central services.

European Regional Funding

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the *(a)* £570 million Government grant for the Yorkshire and the Humber region, *(b)* £350 million for the North East region and *(c)* £780 million for the North West region are classed as EU funding. [151897]

Mr. Raynsford: £185 million for Yorkshire and the Humber, £88 million for the North East and £254 million for the North West of the total budget figures are European Union funding.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for a fire and rescue service headquarters and control centre for the eastern region. [152262]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government have no plans for a fire and rescue service headquarters for the eastern region. Each existing Fire and Rescue Authority in the eastern region is responsible for its own headquarters arrangements. On control rooms the Government have said they accept the conclusions of Mott MacDonald report, on the "Future of Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms in England and Wales", published in December 2003. It believes that control rooms at

regional level are appropriate for reasons of governance, resilience and intra-service working. It is seeking the views of the Practitioners' Forum, authorities and the service on the conclusions of the report and the Government's response. Copies of the report are available in the Library of the House.

Home Ownership Task Force

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made since the report of the Home Ownership Task Force of introducing *(a)* low tranche (below 25 per cent.) shared ownership schemes and *(b)* lower tranche (below 75 per cent.) Homebuy schemes. [152020]

Keith Hill: The Home Ownership Task Force, which reported on 13 November, has proposed 45 recommendations to assist in the delivery of affordable housing. The recommendations included allowing shared owners to purchase further shares in 10 per cent. tranches (rather than the current 25 per cent.) and the introduction of variable equity loans for the Homebuy scheme. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is considering these and other Task Force's recommendations in detail and will respond in the near future.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made since the report of the Home Ownership Task Force of the case for requiring the Housing Corporation *(a)* to set benchmark rents for shared ownership properties and *(b)* to monitor the performance of registered social landlords against these. [152021]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation intends to pilot headline performance indicators for shared ownership in the spring. The indicators have been developed in consultation with affordable housing providers, and measure key aspects of targeting of shared ownership schemes and service delivery.

The Home Ownership Task Force recommended greater transparency in setting rents for shared ownership properties, with the initial level of rents being monitored to ensure they are good value for money for users. The Housing Corporation already collects data on initial shared ownership rents. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is considering the Task Force recommendations in detail and will respond in the near future.

Homebuy Loans

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Homebuy loans were made in each local authority area in London in 2002–03. [152019]

Keith Hill: The following sets out the number of Homebuy loans funded by social housing grant in London in 2002–03 by local authority area.

Local authority name	*Number*
Barking and Dagenham	5
Barnet	7
Bexley	37
Brent	9
Bromley	21
Croydon	35
Ealing	5
Enfield	49
Greenwich	33
Hackney	2
Hammersmith and Fulham	3
Haringey	10
Harrow	7
Havering	23
Hillingdon	9
Hounslow	12
Kensington and Chelsea	1
Kingston upon Thames	9
Lambeth	3
Lewisham	11
Merton	7
Newham	5
Redbridge	14
Southwark	1
Sutton	6
Tower Hamlets	4
Waltham Forest	4
Total	332

House Fires

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report,* column 1463W, how many people died in fires in houses *(a)* equipped with water sprinklers and *(b)* not equipped with water sprinklers in 2003. [152407]

Mr. Raynsford: The latest available information relates to calendar year 2002 and is still provisional. In that year, Fire and Rescue Services in the UK attended 22 fires in dwellings equipped with water sprinklers, there were no deaths reported. In the same period, there were 64,613 fires in dwellings not equipped with water sprinklers, and 443 deaths.

Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the framework agreed by the Housing Corporation and the London boroughs for the pooling of nominations for new lettings on a sub-regional basis. [152027]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation has advised that there are plans to launch a protocol agreement between London boroughs and housing associations in July 2004, subject to successful consultation and agreement between the parties.

The Deputy Prime Minister will make a copy of it available in the Library of the House.

Phone Masts

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many representations he has received from hon. Members concerning health risks of mobile phone masts. [151659]

Keith Hill: Between January 2003 and January 2004, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received 65 letters from Members of Parliament which have included issues relating mobile phone technologies and health.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to revise the code of practice for mobile phone operators concerning the registration of telephone masts. [151660]

Keith Hill: The Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development was published on 11 November 2002. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is setting up arrangements to monitor the operation of the Code but has no plans to amend the planning arrangements for telecommunications development at the present time.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many mobile phone masts there are on his Department's official headquarters. [151661]

Keith Hill: Currently there are no mobile phone base stations installed on Eland House.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many phone masts there are in each local authority area in England. [151662]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will introduce a compulsory register for local authorities regarding phone masts. [151680]

Keith Hill: The current planning guidance on electronic communications is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8). It encourages local planning authorities to maintain a register of masts. The Government have no plans to change these arrangements at present.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will introduce a sequential test for the siting of mobile phone masts to ensure that residential areas are selected only as a matter of last resort. [152300]

Keith Hill: Mobile phone mast development in residential areas is subject to the normal telecommunications planning arrangements in place throughout England, set out in Part 24 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO). These arrangements were significantly strengthened in 2001 and include improved requirements for consulting local people about mast proposals. The changes to the GPDO were underpinned by revised guidance, set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8, Telecommunications.

The Stewart Report on Mobile Phones and Health, published in May 2000 did not recommend that the erection of mobile phone masts should be restricted in residential areas and we have no plans to introduce any such restrictions.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who the members of the *(a)* Urban Development Corporation Black Country, *(b)* Urban Development Corporation London Docklands, *(c)* Urban Development Corporation Merseyside and *(d)* Urban Development Corporation Tyne and Wear were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151810]

Keith Hill: These four urban development corporations were wound up in 1998. They became non-operational on 1 April 1998 and were finally dissolved in July 1998. All board memberships therefore came to an end at that time.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the quangos which have a remit in the regions of the *(a)* North West, *(b)* North East and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber. [151890]

Mr. Raynsford: There are 19 national public bodies with regional or local offices in the North West of England; 20 in Yorkshire and the Humber; 21 in the North East region. These figures do not include central Government Departments and agencies with regional or local offices in northern England.

Annex C of the White Paper, "Your Region, Your Choice" lists the national and regional public bodies that exist in the North East of England. The White Paper sets out the proposed responsibilities of the election of regional assemblies. The proposals will bring some of the bodies under regional democratic control and influence, particularly the Regional Development Agencies, which will be accountable to the elected assembly.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the evidential basis is for the statement in Cm 5511 page 47, paragraph 5.13 on assemblies covering additional running costs through more effective targeting of resources and efficiency improvements. [151007]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government will expect elected assemblies to deliver the best value for money for their voters. The Government will look to them to seek continuing annual improvements in efficiency in the same way that many private and public sector organisations achieve such savings. Bringing together into one organisation linked resource decisions currently undertaken by a range of disparate organisations will enable better, more consistent targeting and cut out duplication.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list *(a)* the recipient organisations and *(b)* the financial amounts over which the proposed regional assemblies would have influence in the (i) £1,100 million for the Yorkshire and the Humber region, (ii) £600 million for the North East region and (iii) £1,600 million for the North West region. [151898]

Mr. Raynsford: The recipient organisations and the financial amounts that elected assemblies would have influence over are:

£ million

Recipient organisation	*North East*	*North West*	*Yorkshire and the Humber*
Local Learning and Skills Councils	420	1,027	693
Small Business Service "core" services	6.1	18.1	13.5
Local Transport Plans	106	324	181
Lottery distributors	23.2	56.1	41.5
Environment Agency	0.08	0.5	n/a
English Nature	2.3	3.7	4.4
Countryside Agency	1.2	1.2	1.9
Highways Agency	86.9	262.4	202.8
Total influencing budget	645.78	1,693	1,138.1

Ann Winterton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister from which budget *(a)* £1,100 million funding for the Yorkshire and the Humber region, *(b)* £600 million funding for the North East region and (iii) £1,600 million funding for the North West region comes. [151899]

Mr. Raynsford: The budgets for which a future elected regional assembly would be responsible are currently allocated to the Government Offices and non-departmental public bodies from central Government Departments.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what matters are subject to scrutiny by the regional chambers in each of the English regions, and what the cost to public funds for each region was in each of the last three years. [152106]

Mr. Raynsford: Regional chambers were each allocated a Government grant of £500,000 in 2001–02 and £600,000 in each of 2002–03 and 2003–04 in order to help develop their capacity, specifically including their ability to undertake scrutiny of the Regional Development Agency for their region.

The details of the coverage of that scrutiny, and the process, vary from region to region and time to time, by agreement between the chamber and its Regional Development Agency.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate the cost savings that will be made as a result of transferring powers and responsibilities currently held by the Government Offices for the Regions to elected regional assemblies. [152259]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimates that each assembly would cost around £25 million a year to run. But £5 million of this cost will be directly offset because staff will be transferring from existing bodies, such as the region's Government Office.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what powers and responsibilities he expects elected regional assemblies to exercise that are exercised by *(a)* central Government and *(b)* local government. [152260]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) on 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 347W.

Right to Buy

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the review of the system for valuing properties for Right to Buy purposes undertaken by the College of Estate Management. [152025]

Keith Hill: Yes. A copy of the report will be made available in the Library of the House when it is published shortly.

Social Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1464W, in what circumstances a bed space is counted as a unit for the purposes of calculating the number of social housing units built or otherwise acquired by registered social landlords. [152183]

Keith Hill: A bed space is counted as a unit for purposes of calculating the number of social housing units built or acquired by registered social landlords where the individual occupying the bed space has a separate occupancy agreement.

Thames Gateway

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* criteria and *(b)* benchmarks have been established for monitoring the implementation of the Government's plans for the Thames Gateway, Essex region; who is responsible for the monitoring; and how they will report back findings. [152430]

Keith Hill: The Government's plans for the Thames Gateway region, including south Essex, are set out in Creating Sustainable Communities: Making It Happen in the Thames Gateway and Growth Areas, published on 30 July 2003. That document makes it clear that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be establishing a Gateway delivery office to work alongside local, regional and national partners to turn strategic plans into operational programmes. The Gateway office will be responsible for monitoring implementation of the Government's plans and for communicating progress. It is anticipated that the office will be up and running shortly.

DEFENCE

Bugaled Breizh

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assistance was *(a)* sought and *(b)* given by his Department's personnel following the distress alert recorded from the Bugaled Breizh on the afternoon of 15 January. [150985]

Mr. Ingram: The Bugaled Breizh was 14 nautical miles (nm) south of Lizard, when it capsized. HMS Tyne, on Fishery Protection duties 22 nm NE of the trawler proceeded to the scene and was tasked by the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre to co-ordinate the search. Royal Air Force and Royal Naval Search and Rescue helicopters were also deployed and recovered two bodies from the sea.

Days at Sea

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many operational days have been spent at sea by each *(a)* Invincible class aircraft carrier, *(b)* Type 42 destroyer, *(c)* Type 23 frigate, *(d)* Type 22 frigate and *(e)* fleet submarine in each of the past five years. [150872]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is being collated. I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

Defence Export Services Organisation

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has produced written

guidelines for how staff in the Ministry and in the Defence Export Services Organisation should deal with allegations of overseas bribery and corruption. [151375]

Mr. Ingram: The Civil Service Code, which is reproduced in the Ministry of Defence Civilian Manual on Conduct, requires that evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others shall be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Driving Offences (Northern Ireland)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces based in Northern Ireland were found to be driving without a valid *(a)* driving licence or *(b)* insurance in each of the last five years; and how many of these cases resulted in a conviction. [151328]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is not immediately available due to a computer failure. We are seeking to retrieve the necessary data as quickly as possible and I will write to the hon. Member when the figures are available.

Enhanced Body Armour

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy for troops engaged in *(a)* expeditionary and *(b)* peacekeeping operations to be issued with sets of enhanced body armour as part of their personal equipment. [151358]

Mr. Ingram: United Kingdom armed forces deploying on peace support operations already routinely receive Enhanced Combat Body Armour (ECBA). The policy for the issue of ECBA to UK servicemen and women prior to their deployment to operational theatres is under review.

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many sets of ceramic body armour have been issued by the Department in each year since 1992. [152080]

Mr. Hoon *[pursuant to his answer, 26 January 2004, Official Report, c. 6]*: I need to correct that answer. Ceramic body armour (ceramic plates) has been issued since 1992 when an initial issue of 32 individual plates was made. Each soldier requires one pair of plates. Combat Body Armour or Enhanced Combat Body Armour is not usually issued as a complete set.

Instead, units request the number of components (covers, fillers and individual plates) required to make up the sets that they need. Current estimates of the issue history of ceramic plates since their introduction into service show an average of approximately 4,000 issues a year up to 1999 when nearly 23,000 were issued. Most recently in 2003 more than 80,000 individual ceramic plates were issued.

Foreign Ships

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 68W, on foreign ships, how many vessels considered for charter by his Department have been rejected in each of the last five years because they failed *(a)* to meet technical requirements and *(b)* to pass a risk assessment undertaken by a marine surveyor. [152443]

Mr. Ingram: Information on why vessels fail consideration of charter by the Ministry of Defence is not held centrally. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Iraq

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which equipment purchased under urgent operational requirements for the Iraq war will be sold; how much it cost to acquire; how much its sale is expected to realise; and to whom it is intended to be sold. [148162]

Mr. Ingram: The principal focus of the Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) process is to provide additional capabilities to meet the demands of specific operations. The majority of equipment purchased for Operation Telic under UOR procedures continues to be used in support of that operation.

When an operation comes to an end or particular UOR equipment is withdrawn, the Department considers, as part of the annual planning round, whether that equipment can and should be retained in-service. That process is currently under way: it is therefore too early to say which UORs will be retained in-service.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith) of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 537W, on Iraq, how many military vehicles hit by depleted uranium munitions have been identified within the southern sector of Iraq under British control; if he will list the options open to coalition forces to deal with these vehicles; when he expects work to begin; what risk assessment of Iraqi *(a)* adults and *(b)* children has been carried out; and if he will make a statement. [150356]

Mr. Ingram: To date eight military vehicles have been identified as having been hit by depleted uranium (DU) munitions within the southern sector of Iraq under British military control. All these vehicles have been clearly marked. Arrangements are currently being negotiated with the US for a contractor to collect and securely store these military vehicles.

Generic assessments of the potential risks from DU munitions have been carried out by organisations such as the Royal Society and the United Nations Environment Programme and are available on the world wide web at: www.postconflict.unep.ch/ and www.royalsociety.ac.uk/du/ The levels of DU contamination found by MOD personnel are much lower than those predicted from these theoretical risk assessments.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether troops serving in Iraq who have purchased winter footwear at their own expense will be reimbursed by the Ministry of Defence; [150891]

(2) whether all British troops serving in winter conditions during the winter of 2004–05 in Iraq will be issued with appropriate winter footwear; [150892]

(3) whether sufficient winter footwear is in stock to ensure that all troops serving in winter conditions in Iraq are issued with a pair. [150911]

Mr. Ingram: There is no need for soldiers to purchase their own winter footwear for Iraq. Soldiers currently serving in Iraq have deployed with both Desert Boots and Combat Assault Boots. Combat Assault Boots are suitable for a minimum temperature of minus 19 degrees centigrade and are appropriate for the temperatures experienced in southern Iraq during the winter months.

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148018]

Mr. Caplin: Summaries of the Ministry of Defence expenditure on External Assistance (EA), of which management consultancy is a part, are available in the Libraries of both Houses for the years 1995–96 to 2002–03. Expenditure on management consultants over the last five years can be provided only at disproportionate cost as it has not previously been recorded as a specific category of EA.

EA expenditure has been recategorised to capture spend on management consultancy and this will be reflected in the returns for Financial Year 2003–04.

Military Museums and Public Bodies (Membership)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who the members of the *(a)* RAF Museum, *(b)* Royal Marines Museum, *(c)* Royal Navy Submarine Museum, *(d)* National Army Museum, *(e)* Defence Scientific Advisory Council, *(f)* Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors and *(g)* Review Board for Government Contracts were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151826]

Mr. Caplin: Details of the Non Departmental Public Bodies requested are listed as follows. This includes details of membership, whether or not the positions are remunerated and what the current expiry date is for each appointment. Appointments are usually made for a period of three or five years, depending on the body concerned, with the potential for reappointments up to 10 years. Members can serve longer if there are exceptional circumstances, however, extensions beyond the 10 year point have to be agreed by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

The Service Museums also employ and pay for a number of staff, Details of staff employed and the remuneration levels set for their Chief Executives can be found in the Cabinet Office publication "Public Bodies", the most recent of which is "Public Bodies 2003" a copy of which is on the Cabinet office website at http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/agencies-publicbodies .

Due to the terms of their trust deeds the Royal Marines Museum and Royal Navy Submarine Museum also have Trustee/Ex-Officio members on their boards, details of which are attached for completeness. These board members do not have standard terms and, given that they are not public appointments, no expiry date need be placed on their membership of the board.

NDPB	*Member*	*Expiry date*	*Remunerated*
Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors	Mr. A. G. Corless	30 April 2007	Yes
Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors	Judge M. Harris (Chairman)	11 January 2012	Yes
Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors	Mr C. M. Lake	30 April 2007	Yes
Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors	Judge T. Lawrence (Deputy Chairman)	29 April 2012	Yes
Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors	Mrs. L. L. Phipps	30 April 2007	Yes
Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors	Mr. K. N. Walton	30 April 2007	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Dr. L. Bennet	28 February 2006	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Professor A. Carruthers	28 February 2004	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Professor J. Hetherington	28 February 2006	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Professor J. Inkson	28 February 2006	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Dr. J. King	31 August 2006	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Professor A. Kinloch	31 March 2004	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Dr. A. Mears	30 March 2005	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Dr. D. Price	01 March 2006	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	[1]Details Withheld	28 February 2006	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Mr. P. Stein	28 February 2006	Yes
Defence Scientific Advisory Council	Professor R. Voles	30 April 2004	Yes
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mrs. J. Baldock	01 June 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Lt. Col. D. Barnard	4 April 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mr. J. Bond	01 June 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mrs. P. Cave	01 June 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Miss D. Fordham	4 April 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mr. D Gower	01 March 2008	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mr. J Harris	01 June 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mr. R Jacklin (Chairman)	01 June 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mr. L. Roman	04 April 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mr. A. Schooler	01 August 2008	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mr. G. Thomas	04 April 2006	No
IBOV to MCTC Colchester	Mr. M. Alcock	01 March 2008	No
National Army Museum	Admiral Sir J. Black	31 August 2006	No
National Army Museum	Mr. R. Marriot	[2]01 February 2002	No
National Army Museum	The Hon. D. McAlpine	31 August 2006	No
National Army Museum	Sir N. Mobbs	31 August 2006	No
National Army Museum	The Right Reverand P. Nott	29 June 2004	No
National Army Museum	Professor J. H. Reid	31 August 2006	No
National Army Museum	Lady M. Vaizey	29 June 2004	No
National Army Museum	General Sir J. Waters (Chairman)	30 June 2006	No

NDPB	Member	Expiry date	Remunerated
Review Board for Government Contracts	Mr. F. Ashman	18 November 2004	Yes
Review Board for Government Contracts	Dr. A. Fox	30 September 2006	Yes
Review Board for Government Contracts	Mr. C. Melrose	31 March 2005	Yes
Review Board for Government Contracts	Mr. G. Staple CB QC (Chairman)	28 February 2005	Yes
Royal Air Force Museum	Rt. Hon. Baroness E. Blatch	24 August 2006	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Lord A. Clarke	12 September 2004	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Sir N. Cossons	05 July 2004	No
Royal Air Force Museum	AVM D. Crwys-Williams	12 September 2004	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Mr. M. Dale	05 November 2005	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Mr. A. Edwards	24 August 2006	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Sir R. Evans	06 August 2004	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Lord D. Evans of Watford	05 November 2005	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Sir G. Hosker	05 July 2004	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Sir R. Jackling	05 November 2005	No
Royal Air Force Museum	ACM R. Johns (Chairman)	06 December 2006	No
Royal Air Force Museum	HE Air Marshal I McFadyen	03 July 2005	No
Royal Air Force Museum	The Rt. Hon. Sir G. Pattie	05 July 2004	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Dr. J Rowbotham	02 September 2004	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Mr. A. Stewart	12 September 2004	No
Royal Air Force Museum	Mr. D. Young	03 May 2005	No
Royal Marines Museum	Lt. Gen. H. Beverley (Chairman)	01 May 2007	No
Royal Marines Museum	Mr. P. Cautley	01 May 2006	No
Royal Marines Museum	Mr. J. G. Farnhill	01 May 2007	No
Royal Marines Museum	Mr. M. Heighton	10 April 2005	No
Royal Marines Museum	Mr. J. Kenroy	01 May 2006	No
Royal Marines Museum	Mr. R. Niddrie	01 May 2006	No
Royal Marines Museum	Col. J. M. Phillips	10 April 2005	No
Royal Marines Museum	Professor J Purvis	10 April 2005	No
Royal Marines Museum	Mrs. S. Rhys Jones	10 April 2005	No
Royal Marines Museum—Trustee (Ex-officio)	WO J. Forster	N/a	No
Royal Marines Museum—Trustee (Ex-officio)	Cllr. M. S. Geddes	N/a	No
Royal Marines Museum—Trustee (Ex-officio)	Cap. B. J. Gibbs	N/a	No
Royal Marines Museum—Trustee (Ex-officio)	Cllr. M. Hancock	N/a	No
Royal Marines Museum—Trustee (Ex-officio)	Col. J. P. C. Heal	N/a	No
Royal Marines Museum—Trustee (Ex-officio)	Lt. Col A. J. F. Noyes	N/a	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	Dr. M. C. Copp	05 July 2005	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	Rear Admiral A. Hoddnott	01 October 2008	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	Cap. T. Meadows	01 October 2004	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	Vice Admiral Sir R. Newman (Chairman)	01 August 2004	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	Mr. R. Shadla-Hall	12 July 2006	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	Mr. L Shurmer-Smith	12 July 2006	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	Mr. R. Webb	01 October 2007	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum—Trustee	Mr. H. Burgess	N/a	No
Royal Navy Sumarine Museum-Trustee	Cllr. M. Geddes	01 May 2005	No
Royal Navy Submarine Museum—Trustee (Ex-officio)	Mr. T. Walters	01 July 2004	No

[1] Details withheld under Section 12 of the "Code of Practice on Release of Government Information"
[2] Currently extended due to exceptional circumstances.

Mine Countermeasure Vessels

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many mine countermeasure vessels have been in service with the Royal Navy in each year since 1997. [150860]

Mr. Ingram: The number of MCM vessels in service with the Royal Navy in each year since 1997 is as follows:

	Number
1997	23
1998	[1]20
1999	[1]21
2000	[1]22
2001	[1]21
2002	[2]19
2003	[2]19

[1] This includes three HUNT class ships converted for NI patrol duties, but which until March 2002 were at 90 days notice for MCM duties.
[2] This includes HMS Bridport, which has been placed in a state of extended readiness since March 2002.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the requirement for nine countermeasures vessels has changed since the Strategic Defence Review. [150868]

Mr. Ingram: The Strategic Defence Review concluded that we should maintain a force of modern and capable mine counter measure vessels. That remains our policy.

Northern Ireland

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers have been (i) killed and (ii) injured by terrorist actions in Northern Ireland since 1974; [152130]

(2) how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time Royal Irish Regiment soldiers have been (i) killed and (ii) injured by terrorist actions in Northern Ireland since 1974. [152129]

Mr. Ingram: From 1 January 1974 until 30 June 1992 there have been 37 full-time and 121 part-time members of the Ulster Defence Regiment who have died as a result of terrorist activity. On 1 July 1992 the Ulster

Defence Regiment and the Royal Irish Rangers were amalgamated to form the Royal Irish Regiment. From that date two full-time members and four part-time members were killed as a result of terrorist activity.

Statistics relating to injuries are not recorded in a format that allows a break down between full-time and part-time members who have been injured as a result of terrorist activity. The statistics also include those who have been injured as a result of public disorder. However, from 1 January 1974 to 30 June 1992, 376 members of the Ulster Defence Regiment were recorded as injured as a result of terrorist activity or public disorder and from 1 July 1992, 152 members of the Royal Irish Regiment were recorded as injured by terrorist activity or public disorder.

RAF Bicester

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library the evidence on which his decision that the most cost-effective transfer of glider squadrons from RAF Bicester would be to RAF Halton was based. [147965]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Ships

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what delays have occurred in the construction of RFA Largs Bay; and if he will make a statement. [150864]

Mr. Ingram: Delays to the construction of RFA Largs Bay have resulted from engineering and design issues, leading to a need for some rework. The ship is currently scheduled to enter service in late 2005.

Royal Irish Regiment (Jonathan Russell)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when Jonathan Russell of the Royal Irish Regiment was arrested by the Police Service of Northern Ireland; when he was charged with offences arising from the protests in Portadown in July 2002; what rank of officer made representations on his behalf connected with the bail application; what rank of officer was responsible for overseeing his behaviour while on bail; and what internal disciplinary action has been taken following conviction. [150607]

Mr. Ingram: John Russell was not in the Army at the time of his conviction. Issues relating to his arrest, charge and bail are matters for the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Civil Courts.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to his Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149328]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is guided by the revised Regulatory Impact Assessment guidance, "Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment", published on 28 January 2003. The guidance advises policy officials to consider time limiting or sunsetting at an early stage of policy development and gives specific examples of where sunsetting may be appropriate.

The Ministry of Defence has one Act that has been passed since 1997 which contains such a clause, the Armed Forces Act 2001.

Trident Submarines

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the running costs of the Trident programme have been since it came into service; what the running costs of the Trident programme are in this financial year; and what the total lifetime running costs of the Trident programme are expected to be at the end of its service period. [151703]

Mr. Hoon: The combined capital and running costs of Trident, since it was declared operational in 1994, has ranged between 2 per cent. and 4 per cent. of the annual defence budget. The total cost of Trident for financial year 2003–04 is not yet available.

Based on current planning assumptions the costs for its remaining period in service are expected to be between 2 per cent. and 3 per cent. of the expected annual defence budget.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Trident submarines are on active service; and how many are being repaired. [151595]

Mr. Ingram: Three Trident submarines are rotating through the operational cycle. The fourth is undergoing a period of pre-planned long maintenance and refuelling.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* missiles and *(b)* warheads are deployed on Trident submarines; and what the approximate yield of the nuclear warheads deployed is. [151596]

Mr. Hoon: The UK's Trident submarines can carry up to 16 missiles but normally carry fewer; I am withholding further information under Exemption 1 (Defence, Security and International Relations) of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information for reasons of national security. The submarine on patrol carries 48 warheads. As for warhead yields, I am withholding the information requested under Exemption 1 (Defence, Security and International Relations) of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information for reasons of national security.

Uzbekistan

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military aid the UK has provided to Uzbekistan since 2001. [145754]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence's military assistance to Uzbekistan since 2001 has been focused on assisting the Uzbekistan Ministry of Defence with its

defence reform efforts through training and advice, which has included stressing the importance of respect for the rule of law and human rights. The United Kingdom also provided a modest amount of military aid to Uzbekistan in March 2002—100 combat helmets and 15 mine detectors.

Welsh Regiments and Battalions

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the average number of days' leave soldiers in Welsh battalions have had in each year since 1997. [151742]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The annual leave entitlement for all Army personnel currently stands at 30 working days per year.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers from Welsh battalions were involved in covering for firefighters during Fire Brigades Union strikes since 1997; and on how many days soldiers from Welsh battalions were involved in covering for firefighters. [151743]

Mr. Ingram: Approximately 1,500 soldiers from Welsh Battalions have been involved in covering for firefighters during Fire Brigades Union strikes since 1997. This was over a cumulative period of about 15 days, all of which were during the 2002–03 strike.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the authorised strength is of each Welsh regiment; and how many vacancies there are in each. [151744]

Mr. Caplin: The current figures for the establishment and strength of the Welsh Regiments, as at 1 December 2003, are included in the following table:

Regiment	*Unit Establishment*	*Unit Strength*
1st Battalion, The Queen's Dragoon Guards	454	460
1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales	741	680
1st Battalion, Welsh Guards	618	630
1st Battalion, The Royal Welch Fusiliers	668	650

Training (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total number of days was that members of the armed forces spent training in Wales in each year since 1997. [151746]

Mr. Ingram: We do not hold central information on this basis.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 3 February 2004

DEFENCE

Civil Service (Disabled People)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out the number of employees in his department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148989]

Mr. Caplin: The number of employees within the department as at 1 October 2003 who have a disability by disability type is:

Description	*Number*
Hearing impairment	1,040
Visual impairment	310
Speech impairment	60
Mobility impairment	810
Physical coordination difficulties	140
Reduced physical capacity	1,010
Severe disfigurement	90
Learning difficulties	140
Mental illness	110
Multiple impairment	20
Unknown disability	20
Disability total	3,700
Not disabled	49,150
Status unknown	35,200
Overall total	88,100

Notes:

1. Permanent staff excluding Royal Fleet Auxiliaries and those not currently paid by the department (e.g. maternity leave, secondment).
2. Values are rounded separately and may not add to totals.

Iraq

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date in October 2002 the military decision was taken to supply all troops in Iraq with enhanced body armour. [151435]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* In line with normal practice, an Urgent Statement of User Requirement, generated by Land Command on 21 October, was endorsed by the Permanent Joint Headquarters on 5 November 2002. This recommended that all ground forces deploying on Operation Telic should be equipped with Enhanced Combat Body Armour.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether permission was obtained from the Prime Minister's office before the orders for extra sets of enhanced body armour were placed; [151438]

(2) which Ministers gave approval for the placing of orders for extra sets of enhanced body armour within *(a)* his Department and *(b)* other departments; [151437]

(3) for what reason political approval for the placing of orders for extra sets of enhanced body armour was not given until 25 November 2002; [151436]

(4) what *(a)* instruction and *(b)* guidance was given by (i) the Prime Minister's office and (ii) other Ministers that orders for equipment required for possible military action should not be placed while diplomatic efforts for a solution in Iraq were still underway. [151359]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The overall process to be followed for meeting the urgent equipment and stock requirements for Operation Telic was approved by Defence Ministers. The basis on which preparatory work was undertaken took appropriate account of the continuing diplomatic process. As the Ministry of Defence's publication "Operations in Iraq—Lessons For the Future" states, operational security and the requirement not to prejudice the UN process limited early planning and engagement with industry until the Urgent Operational Requirement process was announced on 25 November 2002. Neither the approval of Defence Ministers, nor the approval of the Prime Minister or of other Ministers outside the MOD, was required or given for the placement of individual orders, including for Enhanced Combat Body Armour (ECBA).

Ministry of Defence Police

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* manpower strength and *(b)* manpower strength requirement is of the Ministry of Defence Police. [152237]

Mr. Caplin: As at 1 December 2003, the total authorised complement of Ministry of Defence Police officers was 3,433 and the strength, 3,290.

Timber

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether contracts which involve the supply and consumption of timber include the Defence Contract Condition (DEFCON) 691. [152190]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1250–51W. The Ministry of Defence does not keep central records of the number of contracts, which contain DEFCON 691.

Unfair Dismissal Procedures

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what procedures exist for soldiers who consider themselves to have been unfairly dismissed from the Army but failed to submit a redress within three months of discharge to appeal against their dismissal; and if he will make a statement. [152748]

Mr. Caplin: The three-month time limit within which a complaint must be submitted begins from the day on which the soldier is formally notified that they are to be dismissed or discharged. Complaints submitted outside this period will normally be rejected as 'out of time' unless the officer to whom the complaint is first presented judges that it was not reasonably practicable for the complaint to have been submitted earlier.

SCOTLAND

Skye Bridge

Mr. Charles Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the proposed construction and finance costs were of the two alternative bids to construct the Skye Bridge brought forward in 1990 by the construction firms Morrison and Trafalgar House. [147132]

Mrs. McGuire: Following devolution, responsibility and documentation relating to the construction and financing of the Skye Bridge are now a matter for the Scottish Executive. The right hon. Member may wish to write to Nicol Stephen, the Scottish Minister with responsibility for this matter.

The Scotland Office has no continuing responsibility and does not hold information about the Skye Bridge.

Whisky Industry

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met representatives of the Scottish whisky industry; and what plans he has to do so in the future. [150394]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend will shortly be meeting representatives from Diageo and the Scotch Whisky Association to discuss issues affecting the whisky industry in Scotland.

PRIME MINISTER

Child Access

Mr. Brady: To ask the Prime Minister what conclusions he has reached following his investigations into the treatment of child access by the courts announced by him on LBC Radio on 14 January. [149941]

The Prime Minister: The Government believes that children benefit from a continuing relationship with both parents following parental separation, where it is in the best interests of the child. The Children Act 1989 requires the court to make the welfare of the child concerned its paramount consideration when considering cases where parents are unable to agree on access arrangements for their children.

Courts can enforce contact for non-resident parents with deliberate refusal by resident parents leading to fines of up to £2,500 or imprisonment of up to 2 years. However, such penalties may not be appropriate due to the effect this may have on the child at the centre of the dispute.

The Government published its initial response into "Making Contact Work", a report by the Children Act Sub-Committee (CASC), on the issue of facilitation and enforcement of contact orders in August 2002.

In light of this report, we established a stakeholder group comprising representatives from the judiciary, legal professionals, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, other government departments and the voluntary sector to examine the issue of facilitation and enforcement. The Government's full response to the CASC report, which will be published shortly, will address the issue of effective enforcement of court-ordered contact.

Dalai Lama

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Prime Minister whether he intends to meet the Dalai Lama during his forthcoming visit to the United Kingdom. [150785]

The Prime Minister: I regret that because of diary commitments I will be unable to meet the Dalai Lama during his forthcoming visit to the UK.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Prime Minister if he plans to visit Gibraltar in the Tercentenary; if he plans to attend St. Clement Daines tercentenary service; and if he will make a statement on Gibraltar and its tercentenary. [151271]

The Prime Minister: Ministerial visits to Gibraltar in 2004 and attendance at the St. Clement Daines Tercentenary Service are currently under consideration and details have not been finalised.

The Government intends to play a full part in celebrating the Tercentenary. I refer the hon. Member to the statement given by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Hoon), during the debate on the Gracious Speech on 27 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 224–25.

Hutton Inquiry/Report

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will publish his witness statement to the Hutton Inquiry. [152312]

The Prime Minister: Lord Hutton set out the process for his Inquiry with which we agreed.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister who in his Office saw the embargoed version of Lord Hutton's report. [152599]

The Prime Minister: Lord Hutton set out the process for those to receive embargoed copies of his report. The number of advance copies and the associated undertakings of confidentiality were agreed between each of the parties and Lord Hutton. We have nothing further to add.

Iraq

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Prime Minister when he will respond to the Intelligence and Security Committee's Report on "Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction—Intelligence and Assessments, of September 2003". [152964]

The Prime Minister: I am today laying before the House the Government's Response to the Intelligence and Security Committee's September 2003 Report "Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Intelligence and Assessments".

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister who the members of the *(a)* Museums and Galleries Commission, *(b)* National Heritage Memorial Fund, *(c)* Security

Vetting Appeals Panel and *(d)* Committee on Standards in Public Life were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151456]

The Prime Minister: The Museums and Galleries Commission has been replaced by Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. The members and their term of office are as follows:

Mr. Mark Wood BA MA (Chair)
Appointed June 2003 for a four-year term

Mr. David Barrie
Appointed July 2000 for a four-year term

Ms Lynne Brindley BA MA FRSA
Appointed January 2003 for a four-year term

Mr. Ajay Chowdhury
Reappointed April 2003 for a four-year term

Dr. Maurna Crozier
Reappointed April 2003 for a one-year term

Mr. Loyd Grossman
Reappointed January 2004 for a four-year term

Mr. Mark Jones
Reappointed April 2003 for a four-year term

Mr. Neil MacGregor
Reappointed April 2003 for a four-year term

Mr. Bill Macnaught
Appointed February 2003 for a four-year term

Dr. Robert McKee
Appointed January 2003 for a four-year term

Ms Jane Ryder
Reappointed June 2003 for a three-year term

Mr. Michael Stevenson
Reappointed on April 2003 for a four-year term

Mr. Alan Watkin
Reappointed June 2003 for a four-year term

Mr David Henshaw, Sir Geoffrey Holland, Mr. Nicholas Kingsley and Ms Virginia Tandy all appointed January 2003 for four-year terms.

The Chair is paid £32,000 per annum. Other board members do not receive remuneration although they are reimbursed for actual expenses incurred.

The members of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and their term of office are as follows:

Ms Liz Forgan OBE (Chair)
Appointed April 2001 for a three-year term

Ms Madhu Anjali
Appointed July 2002 for a three-year term

Professor Chris Baines
Reappointed July 2001 for a three-year term

The Earl of Dalkeith
Reappointed June 2003 for a three-year term

Mr. Nicholas Dodd
Reappointed September 2003 for a three-year term

Ms Catherine Graham-Harrison
Appointed August 2002 for a three-year term

Sir Angus Grossart (Deputy Chair and Chair of the Committee for Scotland)
Reappointed March 2002 for a three-year term

Dr. Derek Langslow
Appointed February 2002 for a three-year term

Ms Susan Palmer
Reappointed January 2001 for a three-year term

Dr. Mike Phillips
Appointed January 2002 for a three-year term

Professor Tom Pritchard (Deputy Chair and Chair of the Committee for Wales
Reappointed April 2002 for a three-year term

Mr. Giles Waterfield
Reappointed September 2003 for a three-year term

Ms Primrose Wilson (Deputy Chair and Chair of the Committee for Northern Ireland)
Reappointed April 2003 for a three-year term

Mr. James Wright
Reappointed November 2003 for a three-year term

Mr. Mike Emmerich
Appointed July 2003 for a three-year term.

The Chair is entitled to claim £39,025 per annum, the Deputy Chairs are entitled to claim £17,590 per annum, and the Trustees may claim £5,832 per annum.

The members of the Security Vetting Appeals Panel and their term of office are as follows:

Right Hon. Dame Janet Smith (Chair)
Reappointed October 2003 for a three-year term

Sir Stephen Mitchell (Deputy Chair)
Appointed June 2001 for a three-year term

Sir John Blelloch KCB
Reappointed July 2003 for a two-year term

Sir Peter Woodhead KCB
Reappointed July 2003 for a four-year term

Mr. Peter Jones
Reappointed July 2003 for a two-year term

Dr. George Gray CBE
Reappointed July 2003 for a four-year term.

The Chair and Deputy Chair are unpaid. Other members are paid a daily rate of £203 when the Panel is sitting.

The members of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and their term of office are as follows:

Sir Nigel Wicks (Chair)
Appointed March 2001 for a three-year term

Ms Rita Donaghy QBE
Reappointed March 2001 for a three-year term

Professor Hazel Genn CBE
Appointed October 2003 for a three-year term

Sir Alastair Graham
Appointed October 2003 for a three-year term

Dame Patricia Hodgson DBE
Appointed January 2004 for a three-year term

Baroness Maddock
Appointed November 2003 for a three-year term

Rabbi Dame Julia Neuberger DBE
Reappointed March 2001 for a three-year term

Right Hon. Gillian Shephard DL MP
Appointed November 2003 for a three-year term

Right Hon. Chris Smith MP
Appointed October 2001 for a three-year term

Dr. Brian Woods-Scawen DL
Appointed January 2004 for a three-year term.

Those Committee members who do not already receive a salary from public funds may claim £180 for each day they work on Committee business. The Chair may claim £380 for each day spent on Committee business.

Secret Intelligence Service

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister on how many occasions since May 1997 he has called for specific briefing from the Secret Intelligence Service; and if he will list the countries involved. [152319]

The Prime Minister: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on intelligence matters.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Cambridgeshire Schools

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reason the time limit given to Cambridgeshire county council for an appeal against the Government's grant settlement is 27 January. [150134]

Mr. Miliband: The deadline for Cambridgeshire county council to give notice of any objection to the Secretary of State's notice dated 13 January 2004 determining a minimum schools budget for the Council for the financial year 2004–05 was actually 26 January because section 45C(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides that any such objection must be made within 14 days beginning with the date of the notice determining a minimum schools budget. The Council did give notice of objection on 26 January.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reasons his Department rejected a request on 2 December 2003 from the leader of Cambridgeshire county council to discuss Cambridgeshire school's budgetary problems. [150835]

Mr. Miliband: The Leader of Cambridgeshire county council wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister on 2 December with a copy to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills requesting a meeting with local government and education Ministers to discuss the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2004–05 and the implications for school funding. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Phil Hope), replied declining a meeting in line with the Government's clear position of not holding face-to-face meetings with local authorities during consultation on the provisional settlement. The Government believe that it would not be equitable to meet some authorities and not others. I recently met the Leader of the Council to hear the authority's position on the level of its schools budget for next year.

Chorley School Transport

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Chorley received free school transport to *(a)* secondary, *(b)* primary and *(c)* special schools in each year since 1996. [151273]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Although we collect data on home to school transport expenditure, we do not usually collect data on the number of children receiving free transport. However, in response to a recent survey, Lancashire said that it provides free home to school transport to about 17,000 pupils. Its expenditure on this was £16 million in 2001/02.

Criminal Records Bureau

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the effect on further education colleges of the recent increase in fees set by the Criminal Records Bureau; and if he will make a statement. [151859]

Alan Johnson: The effect on further education colleges of the recent increase in fees set by the Criminal Records Bureau will vary from institution to institution depending on staff turnover and the number of students for which criminal records checks are required. The Department does not collect data relating to staff turnover as this is a matter purely for the institutions, neither can it predict the likely rate of staff turnover in future years.

It is the Government's policy to provide colleges with core funding levels which enable them to raise standards while meeting necessary cost pressures, rather than to compensate colleges separately for individual cost increases. Under the spending review 2002 proposals funding per student will rise by 7 per cent. on average in real terms between 2002–03 and 2005–06.

Funding rates are kept under review and adjusted to reflect changes in costs incurred by colleges.

Food Advertisements (Schools)

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans his Department has to ban fast food advertising from vending machines in schools in England; and if he will make a statement. [152518]

Mr. Miliband: The Department for Education and Skills has no plans to ban fast food advertising from vending machines in schools. The Headteacher and governing body of a school decide whether or not to install vending machines in schools, and where they are installed, the products that are sold.

Higher Education Funding

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the effects of tuition fees on women medical students. [149761]

Alan Johnson: Under our proposals for the introduction of variable fees from 2006, women medical students who commence their undergraduate course in 2006 or later, will be liable to pay variable fees of up to £3,000 per year, if the institution they attend decides to charge them.

The Government have made a number of proposals to safeguard access to higher education for those from low income families. Such students will continue, as now, to have the cost of the standard tuition fee (£1,125 in 2003/04) met by the Government. Around three in 10 students will also receive means tested Higher Education Grants of £1,000, to be raised to £1,500 for new students from 2006. In addition, many students

from lower income families will be eligible for partial grant as well as bursaries and other support from universities under arrangements agreed by the Office of Fair Access.

Fees for English domiciled medical students in years five and six are currently paid by the Department of Health. These students also qualify for means tested NHS bursaries in their fifth and subsequent years of study. Department of Health Ministers have indicated that they will, if necessary, take measures to ensure that any increase in the level of tuition fees will not have an adverse impact on the supply, retention, diversity or quality of students on health professional courses, including medicine. Arrangements for repayment of fee loans will, for all graduates, be heavily subsidised: graduates will repay their loans at zero real rate of interest and only when their income exceeds £15,000 per year. Repayments will then be made at a rate of 9 per cent. of income above £15,000. Loans will be written off after 25 years: that could particularly benefit female doctors who opt to take a career break.

Figures collected in March 2003 show that 73 per cent. of newly qualified medical graduates in hospital posts earn £34,533 per annum. This compares very favourably with the salaries of other newly qualified graduates. According to Graduate Prospects, the average starting salary for graduate-level jobs was £18,000 in 2002/03.

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his policy that trainee teachers will be exempt from university top-up fees; and if he will make a statement. [151238]

Alan Johnson: My right hon. Friend announced on 27 January that he will commission a report next year to examine gateways into the professions and the recruitment of graduates to the public services under the new student finance system. The findings of the report will inform the next comprehensive spending review.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether after the introduction of higher student fees he intends to maintain the universities block grant in real terms. [151966]

Alan Johnson: Future levels of funding for higher education will be subject to the outcomes of the current and subsequent spending reviews. I am, however, committed to safeguarding the level of funding for universities already set out to 2005–06 and expect to be able to deliver increases in future years.

Learning and Skills Councils

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to transfer powers and responsibilities held by Learning and Skills Councils to elected regional assemblies where they are introduced. [152100]

Alan Johnson: None. However, elected Regional Assemblies, where introduced, will have an important economic role. In our White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice" we set out proposals for each Assembly to appoint two members to the Board of each local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in its region, and for the national LSC to consult Assemblies on its guidance to the local LSCs. We also propose that local LSCs will be required to have regard to Assembly strategies, including in drawing up their spending plans; and to consult the relevant Assembly about their local plans.

School Funding

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the implications of the grant settlement for 2004–05 on local education authorities' ability to provide centrally funded services. [152135]

Mr. Miliband: The increase in Formula Grant for local education authorities for 2004–05 is 6.1 per cent. The increase for Schools Formula Spending is 5.7 per cent., which includes funding for centrally provided education services. The increase in the LEA sub-block is 3.4 per cent. which is higher than the rate of inflation. It is for authorities to balance their overall resources and spending pressures in drawing up their budgets.

School Meals

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his Answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 145W, on school meals, who has statutory responsibility for the provision of school meals if the governing body of a school resigns. [152219]

Mr. Miliband: School meal provision is the responsibility of the governing body of a school if the school's delegated budget share included funding for meals. If the members of the governing body of such a school all resigned, the governing body would still exist as a corporate entity and would retain the statutory responsibility for meals provision. Although the head teacher would be able to exercise decision-taking powers in accordance with any formal delegation previously agreed by the governing body, it would be for the local education authority to make arrangements as soon as possible for the reconstitution of the governing body membership.

School and College Performance (Value Added Measures)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how value added measures will be used to determine action to be taken in *(a)* individual schools and *(b)* local education authorities. [152307]

Mr. Miliband: Value added information on individual schools is published within the DfES School and College Performance Tables. The data may be used by schools and local authorities, alongside other information, to evaluate their performance in relation to pupils' progress. Local education authorities may augment the published information by providing schools with additional value added data, for example in relation to the performance of individual departments.

The Government are keen to promote intelligent accountability of performance by individual schools as a key step in self-evaluation, and in order to identify areas where improvements may be needed. Value added data may also identify strong areas of the curriculum, and therefore examples of best practice, where expertise may be shared within schools, and with other schools. The Pupil Achievement Tracker, supplied by the DfES, enables schools to benchmark their value added performance against other schools with similar characteristics.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what value added score *(a)* a school and *(b)* a local education authority will need to achieve to be judged as satisfactory. [152335]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* Independent judgments about both schools and LEAs are principally a matter for Ofsted, through the inspection system. While an Ofsted judgment is likely to take into account value added criteria, the overall decision will be made on the basis of a wide range of inspection evidence.

The Government have not set any upper or lower benchmarks in relation to published value added scores, but it is recognised that schools with scores at the lower end of the distribution for schools with similar levels of prior attainment are likely to be underperforming.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will publish the Government's response to the proposed Common Agricultural Policy reform. [151958]

Alun Michael: The Government will announce in a matter of weeks their decision on the method of payment for the CAP reform agreed last June.

The Government are also engaged in the EU negotiations on proposals for further reform of the cotton, hops, olive oil, sugar and tobacco regimes.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act

Andrew Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when a national grant scheme will be set up to assist local authorities with their new powers under Part 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and when the details of the scheme will be made available to local authorities. [151627]

Alun Michael: I am very keen to ensure that the new right of access is implemented as smoothly as possible on the ground and I met the Countryside Agency recently to consider its proposals for a National Grant Scheme to help local authorities, land managers and communities manage open access in their areas proactively. If this scheme is approved, the Agency will announce further details and guidance including the percentage grant-aid available and when it will accept applications.

I hope to make a decision soon, but if we are able to help this will be a bonus for everyone. It is at least as important that local authorities start to gear up now for the introduction of the right of access under the Act, recognising the benefits and opportunities for them and those who live in their area.

Crematoria

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will quantify the financial impact on crematoria of introducing gas cleaning systems to all crematoria; and whether the principle of polluter pays will be adhered to. [151304]

Alun Michael: In reply to the point on financial impact, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer of 17 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 623W, by the Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Bradshaw).

In line with the Polluter Pays Principle there are no funding packages linked to the Local Authority Pollution Control regime.

Large Combustion Plant Directive

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the implications for United Kingdom industry of the National Emissions Reduction Plan in relation to the Large Combustion Plant Directive. [150228]

Alun Michael: Defra commissioned analysis from independent consultants which examined the costs and benefits of the two implementation approaches. This analysis carried out prior to the 2003 consultation on the Directive, suggested that for the 2008–2024 period the national plan approach would cost UK industry as a whole around £650 million whereas the alternative approach—the emission limit values approach—would cost around £900 million.

We have received a range of comments on the analysis in the consultation, and are continuing to assess the potential economic impact on UK industry of the introduction of the Directive using both internal analyses and independent research. We are also in detailed dialogue with industry to help us to understand their views as expressed in response to consultation.

Farming Subsidies

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the schemes under which payments are made to farmers in England; and what the total amounts paid under each scheme to *(a)* limited companies and *(b)* individuals were in the most recent year for which figures are available. [144458]

Alun Michael: Providing this information in the form requested has involved considerable work to interrogate the computer records in order to produce the required figures for England. In order to do so it has been

necessary to include all businesses that do not incorporate the term "limited" in their title in the trading name under the heading "individuals".

The following figures represent payments made in the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund Year 2003—16 October 2002 to 15 October 2003—and do not include Common Agricultural Policy market support schemes.

£

Scheme	Limited companies value	Individuals value
Arable Area Payments	186,582,223.13	682,615,833.19
Arable Agrimonetary Aid	105,596.05	69,870.01
Beef Agrimonetary Aid	29,533.43	473,716.88
Beef National Envelope	991,509.93	13,630,439.57
Beef Special Premium	7,348,365.73	109,024,177.25
Extensification	3,338,151.33	51,927,956.37
Hill Farming Allowance	947,164.39	38,212,678.88
Milk	—	263,043.48
Sheep Annual Premium	4,437,189.52	100,437,173.61
Suckler Cow Premium	5,236,163.74	71,972,974.84
Sheep Agrimonetary Aid	89.70	7,809.36
Slaughter Premium	5,375,867.10	61,472,846.45
Rural Development Service Operated Schemes		
Arable Stewardship	4,047,399.33	1,313,793.43
Countryside Access	2,417,329.19	16,643,660.50
Countryside Stewardship	—	31,451,770.61
Energy Crops	75,096.40	66,693.60
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	4,430,669.21	57,170,574.76
Farm Woodland Premium	1,518,910.06	6,809,501.96
Habitat	223,389.40	1,622,720.89
Moorland	—	25,350.00
Nitrate Sensitive Areas	333,897.80	1,304,479.48
Nitrate Vulnerable Zones	55,680.09	396,565.20
Organic Farming	1,855,784.37	7,833,778.95
Processing and Marketing Grant	5,558,457.51	1,664,423.52
Rural Enterprise	3,285,539.56	14,709,634.85
Vocational Training	601,553.90	1,296,838.65
Structural Funds	13,474,107.46	8,505,521.90
Total	252,269,668.33	1,280,923,828.19

Information Technology

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the *(a)* number and *(b)* location of Information Technology staff in her Department employed directly or on contract at each location outside Guildford. [150614]

Alun Michael: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has made a strategic decision to outsource the majority of its IT service delivery and functions under the e-nabling Defra Programme.

The following table outlines the number of people involved in IT-related work based at each location, outside Guildford (based on our records as at December 2003):

Location	Number of people undertaking IT related work [1]
9 Millbank, London	1
Alnwick	1
Ashdown House, London	[2]6
Bristol	2
Bury St Edmunds	2
Caernarfon	1
Cambridge	4
Cardiff	2
Carlisle	1
Chelmsford	1
Crewe	9
Cromwell House, London	2
Dorchester	1
Eastbury House, London	1
Ergon House, London	8
Foss House, York	9
Gloucester	1
Harrogate	1
Heathrow	1
Kings House, Reading	21
Launceston	[2]1
Leeds	6
Leicester	1
Lincoln	1
Newcastle	2
Nobel House, London	[2]19
Northallerton	1
Norwich	2
Nottingham	5
Oxford	1
Page Street, London	4
Penrith	1
Preston	2
Shrewsbury	1
Stafford	1
Reading	1
Reigate	1
Taunton	1
Temple Quay House, Bristol	3
Trowbridge	1
Truro	1
Whitehall Place, London	4
Woburn Place, London	6
Wolverhampton	1
Worcester	5
Workington	10
Wye	1
Total	158

[1] Some of these people are undertaking a very minimal amount of IT work.

[2] One of these posts is filled by a contractor.

Water Pollution

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research has been conducted on measures to deal with diffuse water pollution; and when she expects to bring forward proposals for legislation. [150964]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The Government have funded programmes of research on the sources, transport and control of diffuse water pollution from agriculture over the last decade. The programmes cover nitrate, phosphorous, sediment/soil erosion, pathogens and the potential implications of control measures for different pollutants. The total annual budget (in 2003–04) is £3 million. The results of this research are available on the Defra website (www.defra.gov.uk/science). The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has also published related work in its report "The impacts of agricultural environmental management: case studies from theory to practice", which is available on the SEPA website (www.sepa.org.uk/publications/index.htm).

This year we intend to publish for consultation detailed proposals for new powers to prevent and control diffuse pollution in England, as part of the action to implement the Water Framework Directive referred to in the "Third Consultation Paper on the Implementation of the EC Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)", published in August 2003. The extent to which such new powers might need to be used in the future will depend on how far diffuse pollution can be controlled through other potential policy instruments, including voluntary action and economic instruments.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Gender Pay Gap

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for Women what steps she has taken to reduce the pay gap; and what evaluation she has made of the success of those steps. [152066]

Ms Hewitt: The pay gap is a complex issue and the Government have limited direct levers to reduce it. However, the Government have taken a number of steps to address the underlying causes including promoting pay reviews by providing business with the tools to undertake them, leading the way through Civil Service pay reviews, introducing the Equal Pay Questionnaire and increasing support for child care, flexible working and work-life balance.

It is extremely difficult to measure the impact of Government policy on the gender pay gap. Latest figures show that the gender pay gap closed by 1 percentage point to 18 per cent. on the mean measure, and stands at 12.9 per cent. on the median measure.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for Women what assessment she has made of the implications of the gender pay gap for levels of female employment. [152067]

Ms Hewitt: I have not made any specific assessment of the implications of the gender pay gap for levels of female employment. The employment rate for women in the UK currently stands at 70 per cent., well above the EU average and above the Lisbon target for the female employment rate of 60 per cent.

What research has shown is that higher levels of female employment tend to be associated with larger gender pay gaps. For example Eurostat figures show that the EU country with the lowest gender pay gap, Italy, also has one of the lowest female employment rates in the EU at just 42 per cent., nearly 30 percentage points below the UK's.

Informed Choice/ Extending Working Lives Programme

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister for Women if she will make a statement on the work of the *(a)* Informed Choice programme and the *(b)* Extending Working Lives programme. [150146]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the Written Ministerial Statement issued today by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, at column 33WS.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Agricultural Research

Mr. Mates: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how, following the grant to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research in December 2003, he will ensure that there is parallel continuity for the bilateral centrally-funded research programmes upon which developing countries have been relying for capacity building and poverty-eradicating applied research; and whether he is providing bilateral funds for such strategic activity. [152719]

Hilary Benn: I was pleased to announce in December 2003 an additional £30 million over the next three years for the work of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. The UK is an active member of the Group and will continue to play a full part in its efforts to mobilise agricultural science to reduce poverty. This funding is additional to the bilateral research programme. I expect to maintain a strong bilateral programme into the future with a clear focus on the millennium development goals.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved were in each of the cases listed. [152424]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID does not hold a central record of the information requested. I can confirm, however, that the Department is not aware of any of its staff having been involved in benefit fraud in any way within the last six years.

Direct Budget Support

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department will take in relation to budget support to identify trends in where the Department's money is being spent. [152084]

Hilary Benn: By its nature general budget support cannot be explicitly tracked once it reaches the recipient country budget. Sector budget support can be clearly classified at the broad level, although how this is subsequently distributed between sub sectors is not always known. For example, we may not be able to say how much of our support to the education sector in a particular country is spent on basic education.

However to inform our understanding of where DFID aid flows are being directed, we are developing a method whereby budget support will be notionally classified by extrapolation from the recipient country's own budget plans. So, for example, if the Government were planning to spend 30 per cent. of its budget[1] on education, then 30 per cent. of our budget support to that country would be classified as expenditure on education. All reporting will state clearly that figures are based on notional allocations derived from budget plans and are therefore only indicative. Some data are already available along these lines.

In the longer term we will seek to agree a standard methodology with other donor agencies facing similar problems.

[1] The extrapolation would only reflect that part of the budget which was for developmental purposes.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of direct budget support in Uganda. [152086]

Hilary Benn: The UK's current budget support arrangement in Uganda began in 2000. Its purpose is to support continued growth and economic stability, to reduce inequality, and to improve the impact of public spending in sectors that are key to poverty reduction and growth.

An internal Project Completion Report (PCR) of the arrangement was completed in September 2003. It concluded that our support had significantly achieved its purpose. The flexibility and predictability of our budget support, together with the role we play in policy dialogue and in providing technical assistance, were identified as important to this success. The strength of our partnerships with Government and also with other donors have also been crucial. Most macroeconomic targets have been met, and the share of Government spending on poverty programmes has increased significantly. The impact of this expenditure has been shown, for example, in growing primary education enrolment, and in important health indicators such as attendance at primary health care clinics. A recent 'stocktaking' review of the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC), to which DFID's budget support is linked, has also reported positively on the PRSC budget support instrument.

DFID commissioned an independent evaluation study of direct budget support in 2002. The first phase of this study (December 2002) developed a framework for evaluation that could be applied widely, using Uganda as a particular example. It concluded that budget support had led to improvements in the efficiency of budget allocations, the effectiveness of state institutions, and the degree of public accountability. This work is being used as the basis of a more comprehensive joint donor evaluation of budget support that is now getting under way.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has received from the National Audit Office on financial controls on direct budget support. [152087]

Hilary Benn: DFID works closely with the National Audit Office (NAO) to improve the value for money of the work we do. DFID worked with the NAO to develop and implement our corporate fiduciary risk policy. This is central to the appraisal and management of the risks associated with providing direct budget support.

The NAO recently undertook a review of the safeguards we have in place to prevent misappropriation and diversion of UK aid. This was an important opportunity to take a joint look at the full range of our financial controls, including how we manage the fiduciary risk of budget support. The review concluded that:

"DFID's work is well-regarded by its partners who acknowledge the leading and proactive role that DFID plays in tackling corruption issues."

It made a number of detailed recommendations which we have taken forward.

We will continue to work with the NAO in this area to ensure that we are able to maximise the developmental benefits associated with budget support.

North Korea

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the nature was of the £800,000 in bilateral aid from the UK to the People's Democratic Republic of Korea in 2001; and what the nature is of current UK bilateral aid to North Korea. [152404]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The £800,000 was humanitarian assistance that was channelled through the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) to support the health care system through the distribution of drugs and basic medical equipment. Also in 2001–02, we provided £1,200,000 to support UNICEF's primary health care programme and £75,000 to the IFRC for emergency assistance to flood victims. In 2002–03, we provided £200,000 to the IFRC for its flood prevention work.

We have recently approved a grant of £1,023,000 to support UNICEF's work, in 2004, in primary health care, including improvements to the water and sanitation systems as well as essential medical supplies such as vaccinations.

Renewables

Mr. Mates: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to maintain the UK's role in European Union research networks for renewable natural resources which are geared to helping developing countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals. [152539]

Hilary Benn: The principal network is the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development which aims to improve the relevance and effectiveness of European investments in agricultural research to reduce poverty in developing countries. The initiative is recognised by the European Parliament and Council and implemented by a coordinating group of members of the European Commission, the member states of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland. The UK is an active participant in the initiative and in the co-ordinating group. An official from my Department is currently seconded to the initiative as its executive secretary.

University Links

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many university links have been established by the higher education Link Scheme funded by his Department; and how the scheme is promoted in UK universities. [152082]

Hilary Benn: It is estimated that some 3,200 Links between higher education institutions in the UK and in 45 developing countries have been supported by the scheme since its establishment in 1981. The British Council manages and promotes the scheme. Higher education institutions in developing countries submit applications for Links funding to the Council (which will help identify suitable UK partners if the applicant requests this).

The current Links Scheme is due to end in March 2006 and no new applications for funding can be accepted. However DFID is currently considering the report of a review of the scheme and possible future options for higher education partnerships. A decision on the outcome of that review is expected shortly.

Zimbabwe

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which non-governmental organisations active in Zimbabwe are receiving funding from his Department. [152514]

Hilary Benn: DFID directly funds a large number of international and Zimbabwean NGOs as part of its humanitarian support for food aid, agricultural recovery and HIV/AIDS. We support numerous NGOs indirectly through the funds we provide to UN agencies operating in Zimbabwe, such as World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Through our membership of the European Union (EU), the UK is also a significant contributor to NGO programmes through the EU's ECHO and Euronaid humanitarian programmes in Zimbabwe.

DFID's main international NGO partners for relief and recovery in Zimbabwe are CAFOD, Christian Aid, Save the Children (UK), Oxfam, John Snow International, HELP (Germany), CARE international and Catholic Relief Service. Our major Zimbabwean NGO partners are FOSENET (a consortia of Zimbabwean NGOs), Farm Community Trust Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Red Cross.

Our HIV/AIDS programme in Zimbabwe includes support for HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives implemented by local faith-based organisations, through Population Services International, and home-based care groups through John Snow International (UK).

WALES

Dee Cockle Regulation Order

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to hasten the implementation of the Dee Cockle Regulation Order. [150041]

Mr. Touhig: I understand that both the Welsh Assembly and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have responded swiftly and positively to requests for assistance in this matter from the Environment Agency Wales and stand ready to do so again if required.

When the Environment Agency Wales submit a formal application for a Regulation Order, the Government will act as quickly as possible.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the visits he has made to armed forces' bases in Wales since October 2002. [151739]

Mr. Hain: I recently met Brigadier Iain Cholerton, Commander 160 (Wales) Brigade and will shortly be visiting a Territorial Army training operation at Maindy Barracks in Cardiff.

National Assembly Powers

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the First Minister of the National Assembly to discuss *(a)* the Richard Commission in general, *(b)* the Labour Party's evidence to the Commission and *(c)* any differences between the Labour Party's Assembly Group's evidence and the evidence given by some Welsh Labour hon. Members. [150056]

Mr. Hain: I meet the First Minister on a weekly basis and we discuss a wide range of issues including the Richard Commission. The Labour Party's position vis-à-vis the Commission is a matter for the party.

Wales Office

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the transfer of money for 2003–04 to the Department for Constitutional Affairs in respect of the Wales Office. [152245]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 27 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 1–2WS, and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury's written statement on 11 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 17WS.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Agency Workers

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the provisions relating to statutory sick pay, contained in the Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 apply to agency workers. [151838]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 repealed a provision that prevented workers with contracts of three months or less from being entitled to SSP. Therefore all workers including agency workers may be entitled to SSP from day one, if they are treated as employees for National Insurance Contribution purposes.

Agricultural Labour

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many successful prosecutions have been brought under the Employment Agencies

Act 1973 against *(a)* employment agencies and *(b)* gangmasters supplying labour to the UK's agricultural industry. [152098]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The total number of successful prosecutions undertaken by the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate under the Employment Agencies Act 1973 is as follows:

	Prosecutions
1977	1
1978	12
1979	15
1980	8
1981	7
1982	5
1983	5
1984	0
1985	2
1986	3
1987	1
1988	0
1989	0
1990	0
1991	0
1992 (to 31March 1992)	0
1992–93	3
1993–94	7
1994–95	3
1995–96	3
1996–97	11
1997–98	14
1998–99	3
1999–2000	3
2000–01	2
2001–02	8
2002–03	8

Data broken down by sector of the private recruitment industry are not available. However, a gangmaster was prosecuted in 1994–95.

Computers (Tax Exemption)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action has been taken and how much has been spent by the Government on promoting the annual tax exemption on loaned computers since it was introduced in 1999. [152064]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The exemption was set out in Budget and other published material when it was introduced in 1999, and it now features in publicly available Inland Revenue guidance on employment expenses and benefits.

The exemption has recently received a major promotional boost with the launch, by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on 19 January, of guidelines on Home Computing Initiatives. The Government have spent £370,000 on the production, promotion and distribution of these guidelines. Industry partners have also pledged significant funds and resources to promote the guidelines and HCI schemes more broadly.

Departmental Budget

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the *(a)* resource and *(b)* capital budget for her Department for each year between 1997 and 2007. [151800]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* These are listed on pages 190 and 194 of "Central Government Supply Estimates 2003–04 Supplementary Budgetary Information" (Cm 5797, May 2003), where a breakdown is available. Figures are shown from 1998–99 (the first year for which resource information was produced) to 2005–06 (the final year of the current Spending Review period). The summary figures are:

£000

	Resource budget	*Capital budget*
1998–99	3,107,878	18,303
1999–2000	4,547,569	-8,205
2000–01	6,579,561	37,860
2001–02	6,595,438	88,840
2002–03	7,652,813	376,308
2003–04	4,918,551	1,196,194
2004–05	5,260,042	164,000
2005–06	5,738,519	101,000

Employment Rights (Information)

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether her Department has made an analysis of the impact of withdrawing paper copies of its leaflets on employment rights on the availability of free-of-charge, printed information at public libraries; [149488]

(2) whether her Department has made an analysis of the impact of withdrawing paper copies of its leaflets on employment rights on voluntary sector organisations providing free advice to the public in this area. [149489]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Yes. Last year the Department consulted leading customers to find out how our information on employment rights could be better focussed on users' needs. As part of this review, an assessment was made of the impact of withdrawing employment rights booklets, using information provided by the Department's distribution service. Public libraries did not appear as regular customers of the distribution service.

The review concluded that Acas and other organisations who provide advice to employers and employees are generally better able to provide user-focussed advice, based on factual advice supplied by the Department. Acas recently produced a series of booklets summarising individual rights. These can be obtained free-of-charge from the Acas distribution centre on 08702 429090.

Although voluntary sector organisations have been major users of the Department's employment rights booklets, I consider that Acas is generally better able to provide advice which meets the needs of these organisations.

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the impact of withdrawing paper copies of its leaflets on employment rights on sections of the public who have difficulties either accessing or using the internet. [149561]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to his Question No. 149488, at column 776W.

The Department has put in place special arrangements to supply our employment rights booklets on request where individuals are unable to access or use the internet.

Fisheries (Compensation)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she intends to publish the list of additional middle water vessels to be added to the list of vessels eligible for Icelandic fishermen's compensation claims; what period will be allowed for appeals; and when she plans to begin processing claims. [151978]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* I expect to publish a list of additional vessels on 2 February 2004. There will then be a period of three weeks for trawlermen or their representatives to appeal in respect of vessels not accepted on the list. Work on processing claims will begin immediately—there is no need for claimants to submit new applications.

Flexible Working

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what surveys between employers and employees were carried out before the legislation on flexible working was implemented; and what comparative surveys have been carried out since the legislation has been implemented. [151830]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Between December 2002 and April 2003, fieldwork was carried out for two DTI Work-Life Balance studies. Data were collected from employers and employees to provide a baseline for future evaluation of the availability and take-up of flexible working. Details of the results can be found at: www.dti.gov.uk/er/emar To provide a direct comparison over time, it is planned that both surveys will be repeated in 2006.

The Department has subsequently commissioned questions on flexible working for an Office for National Statistics Omnibus survey. Results will become available in spring 2004.

The Department is also working with key intermediaries, such as Working Families and Maternity Alliance, to gather qualitative evidence through member/supporter surveys. Additionally, in September 2003, the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development and Lovells conducted a survey of employers on the use of the flexible working law in the first six months after its implementation.

Data collected will form the evidence base for a review of the legislation which the Government have said will commence in 2006.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* children and *(b)* elderly people are living in fuel poor households in (i) the East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire. [150922]

Nigel Griffiths: Fuel poverty defined as occurring when a household needs to spend more than 10 per cent. of its income (including housing benefit and income support for mortgage interest) on all fuels in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime.

The available information from the English House Condition Survey indicates that in 2001 there were 160,000 fuel poor households in the East Midlands Government Office region. (The current published official estimates of fuel poverty are extrapolated from a sample survey of 17,500 dwellings).

More detailed breakdowns within the East Midlands Government Office region are not available from this survey as the sample size is not large enough to enable reliable detailed estimates of fuel poverty at a more local level to be produced.

In England in 2001 under this definition there were 1.7 million households in fuel poverty. Of these, 210,000 contained children. 904,000 contained one or more persons aged 60 or more. The Government's estimates are available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consumers/fuel_poverty/index.shtml

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to maintain the nuclear skills base. [152042]

Ms Hewitt: The Government have been assisting in the establishment of a Sector Skills Council to represent the needs of the nuclear industry. Cogent Sector Skills Council is expected to be licensed shortly and will take a strategic view of the nuclear sector to ensure that the education and training base can meet nuclear employer's current and future needs.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will conduct a public consultation on nuclear power. [152043]

Ms Hewitt: No. The Government consulted fully on energy policy, including nuclear, for the Energy White Paper published in February 2003. The White Paper clearly states that before any decision to proceed with the building of new nuclear power stations, there would need to be the fullest public consultation and the publication of a white paper setting out the Government's proposals.

Post Office

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what discussions she has had with Postcomm about the access charges to be charged by Royal Mail to private mail companies using parts of their network; [146125]

(2) what estimate she has made of the *(a)* revenue and *(b)* profit that will be generated by the access charges to be charged by Royal Mail to private mail companies using parts of their network. [146126]

Ms Hewitt: My Department has a regular dialogue with Postcomm on a wide range of postal issues concerning the postal market. However, decisions on access pricing are a matter for the companies concerned and for the regulator.

Estimating the revenue and profit generated by Royal Mail through access charges charged to private mail companies using part of their network is a commercial matter for the Board of the company.

Research and Development Tax Credits

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what mechanisms are in place to assess the development of new products, services and processes which arise as a result of research and development tax credits; and what assessment has been made using these mechanisms. [152061]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1044W.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of completed projects failed to meet their required performance targets in each of the regional development agencies in each of the last five years. [152062]

Jacqui Smith: Each RDA is involved in a huge number of projects at any one time and many as a co-funder with local and regional partners. Output targets are set for each project but this information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Smart Award

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the take-up rates have been for the New Elements of the Smart scheme in each quarter since their inception in 1999. [152057]

Nigel Griffiths: The figures in the following tables show the number of applications received and offers made under the Smart scheme from 1 March 1999. The new elements introduced under Smart in 1999 were Micro Projects, Technology Reviews and Technology Studies. Micro projects were launched in August 1999 and Reviews and Studies in October 1999.

The Feasibility, Development and Micro elements of Smart closed to applications on 31 August 2003. The Reviews and Studies element closed to applications on 31 May 2003.

1999–2000

	Q1 April to June	*Q2 July to September*	*Q3 October to December*	*Q4 January to March*	*Total*
Feasibility					
Application	61	81	75	57	274
Offer	33	58	97	63	251
Development					
Application	41	37	41	43	162
Offer	18	49	39	26	132
Micro					
Application	0	0	9	26	35
Offer	0	0	2	11	13
Reviews					
Application	0	0	2	4	6
Offer	0	0	0	6	6
Studies					
Application	0	0	3	1	4
Offer	0	0	0	4	4

2000–01

	Q1 April to June	*Q2 July to September*	*Q3 October to December*	*Q4 January to March*	*Total*
Feasibility					
Application	64	78	87	111	340
Offer	61	43	66	67	237
Development					
Application	63	52	43	65	223
Offer	43	32	46	31	152
Micro					
Application	40	53	40	50	183
Offer	23	24	39	19	105
Reviews					
Application	5	16	12	31	64
Offer	4	13	11	27	55
Studies					
Application	3	6	12	12	33
Offer	3	5	10	11	29

2001–02

	Q1 April to June	*Q2 July to September*	*Q3 October to December*	*Q4 January to March*	*Total*
Feasibility					
Application	95	102	118	118	433
Offer	66	83	81	82	312
Development					
Application	45	51	55	64	215
Offer	36	38	30	41	145
Micro					
Application	50	50	49	53	202
Offer	21	21	26	38	106
Reviews					
Application	38	44	72	62	216
Offer	35	35	62	46	178
Studies					
Application	12	12	20	24	68
Offer	7	9	8	12	36

2002–03

	Q1 April to June	*Q2 July to September*	*Q3 October to December*	*Q4 January to March*	*Total*
Feasibility					
Application	132	219	198	180	729
Offer	107	102	139	150	498
Development					
Application	71	101	90	69	331
Offer	51	59	67	60	237
Micro					
Application	28	56	63	48	195
Offer	18	36	40	40	134

2002–03

	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to September	Q3 October to December	Q4 January to March	Total
Reviews					
Application	73	74	53	43	243
Offer	56	65	52	44	217
Studies					
Application	16	21	9	12	58
Offer	13	20	10	13	56

2003–04

	Q1 April to June	Q2 July to September	Q3 October to December	Total
Feasibility				
Application	192	166	0	358
Offer	158	115	73	346
Development				
Application	79	29	0	108
Offer	50	34	29	113
Micro				
Application	43	19	0	62
Offer	24	17	9	50
Reviews				
Application	106	0	0	106
Offer	93	0	0	93
Studies				
Application	17	0	0	17
Offer	16	0	0	16

Wage Levels (Catering, Tourism and Leisure Industries)

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of low pay levels in the *(a)* catering, *(b)* tourism and *(c)* leisure sectors; and if she will make a statement. [150976]

Mr. Sutcliffe: According to the April 2003 grossed New Earnings Survey the bottom decile hourly earnings of employees in *(a)* the catering sector (SIC code 55.5) was £4.23 *(b)* tourism related industries (SIC codes 55.1, 55.2, 55.3, 55.4, 63.3, 92.5, 92.6, 92.7) was £4.20 and for *(c)* sports and leisure assistants (SOC 2000 code 6211) was £4.20. This compares to the bottom decile hourly earnings of £4.67 for all employees in the UK. The adult and youth rates of the National Minimum Wage at the time were £4.20 and £3.60 respectively.

The vast majority of employers in the UK are complying with the National Minimum Wage but we will continue to take enforcement action where necessary to tackle the minority of bad employers.

Trade Barriers

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether it is her objective to achieve a total elimination of all tariff barriers by all World Trade Organisation members. [149146]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The chances of a total elimination of all Tariff barriers by all members of the World Trade Organisation are remote. Our aim is to reduce barriers as much as reasonably possible. A number of studies have concluded that the elimination of tariffs and other trade barriers would bring major benefits. In recent years, studies by Michigan University and the World Bank suggest that the elimination of tariffs and other trade barriers in industry and agriculture could boost global incomes by between $450 billion and $830 billion per annum over the longer term. From time-to-time for short periods tariffs or safeguards may have merit but our broad approach is to press for the elimination of as many tariffs as possible.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will investigate the greater use of interim orders for anti-social behaviour; and what discussions he has had with the *(a)* police and *(b)* Crown Prosecution Service on this issue. [151779]

Ms Blears: Interim Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were introduced in December 2002 under the Police Reform Act 2002 to prohibit anti-social behaviour at the start of the court process pending the outcome of the full application. Relevant authorities, that is, the police, local authorities, registered social landlords and housing action trusts can apply for interim orders in the civil magistrates and county courts. Feedback from these agencies is that they find interim orders to be a quick and effective tool in protecting people from anti-social behaviour.

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the details held on an asylum seeker include the region of the country from which they arise. [148021]

Beverley Hughes: Information about the region of the country from which an asylum seeker has arrived or originated may be obtained as part of the asylum screening process or during the investigation into their claim. Any such information will normally be recorded on an individual asylum seeker's Home Office case file.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assistance will be given to failed asylum-seeking families who cannot be returned to their country of origin because there are no removal agreements or removal arrangements have been suspended. [151444]

Beverley Hughes: Support will not be withdrawn from failed asylum-seeking families if they are taking reasonable steps to leave the United Kingdom voluntarily or placing themselves in a position in which they are able to leave voluntarily. Instances where there are no removal agreements or that removal agreements have been suspended, this factor will be taken into account but will not necessarily be the determining factor.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in

benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved were in each of the cases listed. [151649]

Fiona Mactaggart: The figures so far as information is available in the form requested are as follows.

Cases of benefit fraud

Department	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Home Office						
Investigated	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]—	[1]—	n/a
Suspended	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]—	n/a	[1]—
Dismissed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]—	[1]—
Prosecuted	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Convicted	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]—	[1]—
Amount housing benefit (£)	—	—	—	n/a	n/a	19,000
Amount council tax benefit (£)	—	—	—	n/a	n/a	2,000
UK Passport Agency						
Investigated	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]—
Suspended	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]—
Dismissed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Prosecuted	n/a	n/a	n/a	—	—	n/a
Convicted	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Amount housing benefit (£)	—	—	—	—	—	2,947.89
Amount council tax benefit (£)	—	—	—	—	—	482.18

n/a = indicates that no comprehensive figures available.
[1] The process from investigation to conviction does not necessarily span only one year. E.g. suspended 2001, convicted 2002 and dismissed 2003.

Private Security Industry

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to encourage *(a)* clubs and *(b)* pubs to ensure that their bouncers undergo professional training. [151983]

Ms Blears: From 1 March this year, the Security Industry Authority (SIA) will roll out a mandatory national licensing scheme for door supervisors ('bouncers'). Licensing will commence in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and then roll out on a geographical basis across England and Wales. On current plans, door supervisors in the Midlands must obtain an SIA licence by 18 October 2004.

To qualify for a door supervisor licence, applicants will be required to pass three checks. The first will be an identity check, the second a criminal record check, and the third a check on professional competence to do the job. Professional competence will be demonstrated by successfully completing a training course provided by a training provider accredited by an SIA approved awarding body. Details of the licensing criteria for door supervisors will shortly be posted on the SIA's website www.the-sia.org.uk.

Burglaries

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many burglaries were committed in the last 12 months for which figures are available, broken down by police force area; and in how many of those cases convictions were obtained for *(a)* custodial and *(b)* non-custodial sentence, broken down by police force area. [150723]

Ms Blears: Information on recorded burglaries in 2002–03, and sentencing statistics for 2002, are given in the tables.

Total recorded burglary comprises the offences of burglary in a dwelling, and burglary in a building other than a dwelling.

Number of persons sentenced for burglary1 at all courts and those sentenced to a custodial and non-custodial sentence, by police force area—England and Wales 2002

		Sentence breakdown	
Police force area	*Total sentenced*	*Sentenced to a custodial sentence2*	*Sentenced to a non-custodial sentence*
Cleveland	677	377	300
Durham	432	217	215
Northumbria	927	389	538
North East Region	2,036	983	1,053
Cheshire	500	288	212
Cumbria	253	120	133
Greater Manchester	1,614	816	798
Lancashire	1,223	610	613
Merseyside	650	358	292
North West Region	4,240	2,192	2,048
Humberside	579	318	261
North Yorkshire	300	162	138
South Yorkshire	937	523	414
West Yorkshire	1,598	873	725
Yorkshire and the Humber Region	3,414	1,876	1,538
Derbyshire	533	290	243
Leicestershire	458	212	246
Lincolnshire	323	137	186
Northamptonshire	237	122	115
Nottinghamshire	747	356	391
East Midlands Region	2,298	1,117	1,181
Staffordshire	534	301	233
Warwickshire	187	95	92
West Mercia	494	246	248
West Midlands	1,862	1,039	823
West Midlands Region	3,077	1,681	1,396
Bedfordshire	224	131	93
Cambridgeshire	335	174	161
Essex	434	230	204
Hertfordshire	314	145	169
Norfolk	261	109	152
Suffolk	235	89	146
East of England Region	1,803	878	925
London, City of	27	14	13
Metropolitan police	3,234	1,776	1,458
London Region	3,261	1,790	1,471

Number of persons sentenced for burglary1 at all courts and those sentenced to a custodial and non-custodial sentence, by police force area—England and Wales 2002

Police force area	Total sentenced	Sentence breakdown: Sentenced to a custodial sentence2	Sentence breakdown: Sentenced to a non-custodial sentence
Hampshire	776	310	466
Kent	489	220	269
Surrey	191	88	103
Sussex	402	214	188
Thames Valley	744	360	384
South-East Region	2,602	1,192	1,410
Avon and Somerset	695	379	316
Devon and Cornwall	526	188	338
Dorset	244	131	113
Gloucestershire	247	93	154
Wiltshire	233	92	141
South-West Region	1,945	883	1,062
Dyfed Powys	214	77	137
Gwent	384	146	238
North Wales	317	147	170
South Wales	785	388	397
Wales	1,700	758	942
England and Wales	26,376	13,350	13,026

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Detention and training order, detention in a young offender institution, detention under secs 91/92 of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 and unsuspended imprisonment.

Source:
Offending and Criminal Justice Group.

Recorded offences of burglary by police force area and region 2002–03

Police force area	All burglary offences recorded
Cleveland	14,856
Durham	7,656
Northumbria	22,704
North East Region	45,216
Cheshire	14,194
Cumbria	4,898
Greater Manchester	75,367
Lancashire	20,487
Merseyside	25,956
North West Region	140,902
Humberside	27,127
North Yorkshire	11,595
South Yorkshire	34,468
West Yorkshire	69,807
Yorkshire and the Humber Region	142,997
Derbyshire	18,465
Leicestershire	12,832
Lincolnshire	10,831
Northamptonshire	11,381
Nottinghamshire	33,190
East Midlands Region	86,699
Staffordshire	15,172
Warwickshire	7,437
West Mercia	16,375
West Midlands	56,531
West Midlands Region	95,515
Bedfordshire	8,336
Cambridgeshire	12,775
Essex	16,909
Hertfordshire	11,713
Norfolk	9,681
Suffolk	6,248
East of England Region	65,662
London, City of	444
Metropolitan police	113,427
London Region	113,871
Hampshire	18,217
Kent	18,371
Surrey	9,727
Sussex	17,321
Thames Valley	29,432
South East Region	93,068
Avon and Somerset	30,182
Devon and Cornwall	15,700
Dorset	7,355
Gloucestershire	8,694
Wiltshire	6,242
South West Region	68,173
Dyfed Powys	2,104
Gwent	7,586
North Wales	8,543
South Wales	18,615
Wales	36,848
England and Wales	888,951

Notes:

1. All burglary comprises burglary in a dwelling, and burglary in a building other than a dwelling.

2. Total numbers of recorded crimes will be affected by changes in recording as a result of the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) across England and Wales on 1 April 2002. This impact will vary for different types of offences, with the impact for domestic burglary being an increase of 3 per cent. in the number of crimes recorded due to the NCRS.

Community Support Officers

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers are employed by each police authority. [151866]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* The table gives a breakdown of the number of Community Support Officers (CSOS) employed by each police authority.

CSOs recruited to the end of January 2004

Authority	Total CSOs recruited
Avon and Somerset	46
Bedfordshire	8
Cambridgeshire	59
Cheshire	33
Cleveland	80
Devon and Cornwall	55
Dorset	7
Durham	27
Dyfed-Powys	5
Essex	77
Gloucestershire	60
Greater Manchester	160
Gwent	50

CSOs recruited to the end of January 2004

Authority	*Total CSOs recruited*
Hertfordshire	30
Kent	58
Lancashire	111
Leicestershire	44
Lincolnshire	44
Merseyside	78
Metropolitan Police	1,372
Norfolk	34
Northamptonshire	12
North Wales	8
North Yorkshire	37
Northumbria	45
Nottinghamshire	43
South Wales	63
South Yorkshire	42
Staffordshire	5
Suffolk	12
Surrey	64
Sussex	72
Thames Valley	6
Warwickshire	28
West Mercia	55
West Midlands	59
West Yorkshire	206
Wiltshire	24
Total	3,219

Correspondence

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Spelthorne of 10 November 2003, about a constituent, Mr. J. A. Hernandez. [149030]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 29 January 2004.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 8 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Dr. Louis Sterling; [149550]

(2) when he will reply to the letter to him dated 8 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Dr. Louis Sterling. [151232]

Mr. Blunkett: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 28 January 2004.

Corruption Offences (Legal Assistance)

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many requests for mutual legal assistance his Department has received for corruption offences since November 1997; from which countries these requests came; when they were received; and how long it took for his Department to process each request. [151316]

Caroline Flint: The United Kingdom is committed to assist its international partners in the fight against corruption and has recently signed the UN Convention Against Corruption. The UK Central Authority (UKCA) in the Home Office has processed a number of such cases during the period in question. However, the more detailed statistics sought by the hon. Member are not available as UKCA does not currently collate them in a manner that can produce data according to offence type.

Crime Statistics

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect on total recorded crime of changes in recording practice since 1997–98. [150185]

Ms Blears: There have been two major changes to recording practices which have affected total recorded crime since 1997–98. In April 1998, the Home Office Counting Rules were substantially revised and in April 2002 the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was adopted nationally in England and Wales. These changes were introduced to promote greater consistency between police forces in the recording of crime, to take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording and to improve the overall quality of statistics on recorded crime.

It is estimated that the changes to the Home Office Counting Rules introduced in April 1998 had the effect of increasing total recorded crime by 14 per cent. and the introduction of the NCRS is estimated to have increased total recorded crime by 10 per cent. in 2002–03.

Further details on these changes to recording practices and their effects on recorded crime statistics can be found in "Recorded Crime Statistics England and Wales, April 1998 to March 1999" and "Crime in England and Wales 2002–03", copies of which are available in the Library. A more detailed account of the impact of NCRS is given in "National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS): An Analysis of the Impact on Recorded Crime. Companion Volume to Crime in England and Wales 2002–03", which is available on the Home Office website.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects measures introduced by the Department to result in a reduction of recorded crime. [150186]

Ms Blears: The latest published data, covering the period July to September 2003, show that total recorded crime is stable compared to the same period 12 months previously. This includes falls in robbery (2 per cent.), domestic burglary (3 per cent.), other burglary (8 per cent.), and thefts of and from vehicles (8 per cent.).

Recorded crime is not the best indicator of long-term trends in crime because it is sensitive to changes in police recording practices and public reporting to the police. However, the British Crime Survey, which is not affected by these factors and which covers unreported

and unrecorded crime as well as crimes reported to the police, shows that crime has fallen by 25 per cent. since 1997, with a further 1 per cent. fall in the 12 months to September 2003 compared to the year ending September 2002.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why statistics on crime in Wales are not separated from statistics for England. [150463]

Ms Blears: Statistics on crime in Wales are published separately in a number of publications. For example, the "Digest of Welsh Statistics 2003", published by the National Assembly for Wales, contains a chapter on crime and justice statistics. This can be found on the Welsh Assembly website at http://www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwales/content/publication.htm. A range of other statistics are available through the Welsh Assembly website at http.//www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwales/topicindex/topics.htm under "Crime".

The Home Office Statistical Bulletin 7/03, "Crime in England and Wales 2002/2003" includes breakdowns of statistics for Wales, and for police forces within Wales, along with equivalent figures for English regions. These statistics include the number of recorded offences broken down by offence group, with offences per 1,000 population given for these figures. Victimisation rates are also given, as well as overall detection rates over time for Wales, methods of detection in 2002–03, and rates of detection for each main offence group in 2002–03. There are also breakdowns of violent crime offences, burglary and vehicle crime offences by police force area. In the internet publication, a separate chapter contains a summary for Wales of the main findings from crime statistics and British Crime Survey and this is available at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/wales.pdf.

Supplementary Volume 2 to "Crime in England and Wales 2002/2003", which deals with public attitudes to crime, disorder and the criminal justice system, was published on 22 January. It includes figures for Wales, as well as English regions, concerning confidence in the criminal justice system, confidence in the police, perceptions of crime, and worry about crime.

Police Service (Essex)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time police officers were employed in Southend in each of the last 10 years. [152201]

Ms Blears: The deployment of officers to basic command units and to other specialist units in Essex police is an operational matter for the Chief Constable (Mr. David Stevens QPM).

Information on police officer numbers for each Basic Command Units is only available for March 2002 and 2003 and is set out in the table.

Southend basic command unit

	Basic command unit strength
31 March 2002	[1]267
31 March 2003	[2]273

Source:

[1] HM Inspectorate of Constabulary Annual Statistical Return for March 2002

[2] Research, Development and Statistical Directorate (RDS). Details for BCU strength in Essex police can be found on the RDS pages of the Home Office website.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to increase the establishment of the Essex Constabulary. [152154]

Ms Blears: It is for the Chief Constable (Mr. David Stevens QPM), in consultation with the Essex Police Authority, to determine police officer numbers subject to the budget set by his authority.

At the end of August 2003 Essex Police had record strength of 3,063, which is 102 more officers than in March 1997. I understand that Essex Police expect strength to be 3,081 by March this year. In addition Essex Police plan to have 55 Community Support Officers by 31 March 2004.

We have supported increases in police strength through the Crime Fighting Fund (CFF). Essex Police was allocated 197 CFF recruits over the three years to March 2003 fully funded by the Home Office. Continuation funding will continue for these posts. In addition Essex was allocated a further 10 CFF posts for 2003–04 funded at the rate of 75 per cent. For 2004–05 it is proposed that funding for these posts will be at the rate of 60 per cent.

Police staff make an important contribution to policing of Essex as many have been used to free police officers for operational duties. Between March 1997 and March 2003 police staff strength in Essex increased by 483 to 1,682.

Criminal Records Checks

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what unplanned expenditure has been incurred in each financial year by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Criminal Records Bureau since the commencement of the Criminal Records Project. [141822]

Ms Blears: The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is an executive agency of the Home Office. The CRB's Corporate and Business Plans for 2002–07 projected planned expenditure of £167.7 million up to 30 September 2003. Actual expenditure for the period was £123.9 million. In addition, £1.26 million was spent in the first financial year of the project, financial year 1999–2000. Planned and actual expenditure can be broken down by financial year as follows.

£ million

Financial year	Planned Gross spend	Planned Fee income	Planned Operating deficit	Actual Gross spend	Actual Fee income	Actual Operating deficit
1999–2000	1.20	0.00	(1.20)	1.26	0.00	(0.06)
2000–01	5.30	0.00	(5.30)	4.60	0.00	(4.60)
Percentage	36.80	3.30	(33.50)	27.60	1.50	(26.10)
2002–03	83.30	63.20	(20.10)	57.90	18.30	(39.60)
¾ (to 30 September 2003)	42.30	38.60	(3.70)	33.80	17.10	(16.70)
Total	168.90	105.10	(63.80)	125.16	36.90	(87.06)

The Home Office and other departments have contributed towards meeting deficits.

Mrs. Betty Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the Criminal Records Bureau is meeting its targets for processing applications for taxi driver licences; [148481]

(2) what percentage of applications for taxi driver licences were processed by the Criminal Records Bureau within target times in the latest month for which figures are available; [148482]

(3) how many applications for taxi driver licences are *(a)* awaiting processing and *(b)* being processed by the Criminal Records Bureau. [148483]

Ms Blears: I am unable to answer my hon. Friend's question about the percentage of applications for taxi-driver licences processed by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) within target times because the CRB does not hold information in that format. However, overall, the CRB has been consistently meeting its targets for processing Disclosure applications since June 2003. The following table illustrates the current position.

Service performance	December	Year to date
90 per cent. of Standard Disclosures issued within two weeks	Exceeded	93 per cent.
90 per cent. of Enhanced Disclosures issued within four weeks	Exceeded	92.9 per cent.
90 per cent. of calls answered within 20 seconds	Exceeded	89.6 per cent.
5 per cent. of applications over six weeks old	Exceeded	n/a

To the CRB, applications awaiting processing are those where an applicant has asked for a form to be sent out and the form has not been returned to the CRB. Applications being processed are those that have been fully and correctly completed by the customer and returned to the CRB. No disclosure applications for taxi drivers or anyone else are withheld from going on to the CRB computer system; all are immediately processed upon receipt.

European Arrest Warrant

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many EU member states have adopted the recent proposals for a European Arrest Warrant; and how many have indicated that they will adopt it in due course. [150661]

Caroline Flint: Eight EU member states are now operating the European Arrest Warrant (EAW). They are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The remaining member states are in the process of implementing the EAW into their domestic legislation.

Extraditions

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what records are kept on extraditions to EU countries from the UK. [150791]

Caroline Flint: Since the commencement of the Extradition Act 2003 on 1 January 2004, the National Criminal Intelligence Service has maintained an electronic record of extradition requests to the UK from those EU countries which have implemented the European Arrest Warrant, while the Home Office has maintained an electronic record of extradition requests from other EU countries. Prior to 1 January this year, the Home Office maintained an electronic record of such requests from all EU countries going back to 1997; and there are earlier paper records.

Home Office Challenge Fund

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which local initiatives have benefited from the Home Office Challenge Fund; and how much each local initiative has received. [150191]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2003–04 almost £2 million will have been allocated to 43 projects, both new recipients and existing ones, throughout the United Kingdom. These projects cover a range of innovative local schemes to help refugees play a full and active role in their new communities, for example through assisting access to the job market, acquisition of employable skills, English language tuition, and supporting families through education and training.

More information on all the selected projects is available on the Immigration and Nationality Directorate Home Office website.

List of organisations awarded grants from the 2003–04 challenge fund

	£
East of England	
Employability Forum	28,650
East of England Consortium	47,300
London	
East London Somali Association	43,585
Evelyn Oldfield Unit	31,500
Refugees Into Jobs	93,297
Prisoners of Conscience Appeal Fund	40,000
Common Purpose	32,000
Ethiopian Community Centre in the UK	27,917
South London Tamil Welfare Group	25,750
Praxis	71,496

List of organisations awarded grants from the 2003–04 challenge fund

	£
Hackney Playbus	13,390
RETAS	73,812
The Presswise Trust	90,640
FOREF (Friends of Refugees Forum)	12,950
Sierra Leone Refugee Welfare Association	21,750
Holy Cross Centre Trust	31,500
Council for Assisting Refugee Academics	30,000
North East	
Newcastle City Council	31,800
Mental Health Matters	62,000
Stockton District Advice and Information Service	12,588
North West	
North West Consortium	63,189
Toxteth Community College	44,954
Liverpool Family Service Unit	64,714
North West Consortium	14,041
British Red Cross (running two projects)	88,000
Scotland	
Scottish Refugee Council	19,489
Prince's Trust	44,800
Glasgow ESOL Forum	35,506
South East	
Care co-operatives	19,570
Thanet Early Years Project	14,404
Kent Refugee Action Network	39,140
Community Self Build Agency	33,000
South West	
Women's Business Development Agency	50,000
Wales	
Cardiff City Council	51,272
SOVA	78,093
West Midlands	
Roselodge—CIP	116,000
Wolverhampton Refugee Settlement and Integration	67,364
Midland Refugee Council	56,650
Yorkshire and Humberside	
Refugee Lifeline	40,000
Yemeni Economic and Training	50,000
CALTEC	41,541
Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium	46,014

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Home Office Challenge Fund will continue indefinitely; what funding will be made available in each of the next five years; and what criteria are used in allocating funding from the Challenge Fund. [150192]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Challenge Fund was introduced in 2001 to support local projects helping those who have fled persecution and been granted asylum in the UK to integrate into their new communities. Initially a three-year scheme, the Home Office announced in December 2003 that it planned to continue the Challenge Fund for the foreseeable future.

The availability and amount of funding over the next five years is dependent on future Spending Reviews and on evidence of how beneficial the funding stream has been to support the integration of refugees. It is currently expected that £3 million will be made available for both 2004–05 and 2005–06.

When allocating funding, consideration is given to the relevance of the project to the Home Office integration strategy, outlined in "Full and Equal Citizens", to its cost-effectiveness, and to the expertise and reliability of the applicant and any partner, organisations; applications must, of course, be focused on refugees and those granted Humanitarian or Discretionary Leave. Projects are subjected to a programme of monitoring and evaluation in order to identify those projects that are most effective in helping to integrate refugees.

Illegal Entrants (London Airports)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal entrants have been detected at *(a)* Heathrow, *(b)* Gatwick, *(c)* Stansted, *(d)* Luton and *(e)* City airport in each of the last six years. [148439]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The number of people against whom illegal entry action was initiated in each of the last six years for which information is available is shown in the table. Information on the ports at which these persons were detected is unavailable and would be available by examination of individual case-files only at disproportionate cost.

Persons against whom illegal entry action was initiated 1997 to 2002

	Number of persons
1997	14,390
1998	16,500
1999	21,165
2000	47,325
2001	69,875
2002[1]	48,050

[1] Provisional figures.

Illegal entry action is initiated against those people who are detected entering the country clandestinely or by means of deception, either verbal or documentary.

This information and other statistics on the immigration and asylum system are published annually in the Command publication "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom" a copy of which is in the House Library and can be found on the Home Office website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in his Department. [150932]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office (core directorates including the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)) has outsourced support for most of its IT infrastructures, including desktop computers, to three companies:

Sirius (Fujitsu Services with IBM and Global Crossing) covering the core office and some IND locations (the 'POISE' infrastructure);

Siemens covering caseworking for IND; and

Steria covering the Probation Service areas.

Home Office contracts provide for the audit of supplier service provision including licence provision. Asset registers are maintained for the major infrastructures. The Home Office allows its staff and people working on behalf of the Department reasonable personal use of its IT equipment. Usage is monitored in accordance with the Information Commissioner's Code of Practice: Monitoring at Work. The Department's notices: 'Non-official use of Home Office telephones and computer facilities', 'Use of POISE and the Internet including non-official purposes' and 'Warning to Staff: Misuse and Abuse of IT' set out Departmental policy to staff. Misuse of hardware and/or software assets may lead to disciplinary measures including dismissal.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151048]

Fiona Mactaggart: A Centre of Excellence was established within the Home Office in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition based programmes and projects. As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings. All centres of excellence are currently developing future plans and as part of this process measurement of savings will be defined.

Knives

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to bring forward proposals to differentiate between kitchen knives and combat knives in legislation. [150954]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* None. Current legislation recognises that all knives have potential to cause injury and, in general, does not distinguish between kitchen knives and combat knives. Under the Knives Act 1997, it is an offence to market a knife which indicates that it is suitable for combat or is likely to encourage violent behaviour.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what efforts are being made to ensure that children under the age of 16 do not *(a)* buy and *(b)* carry knives. [150956]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Section 141A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 makes it an offence to sell a knife or other article with blade or point to persons under 16 years of age. Under Section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 it is an offence of having an article with a blade or point in a public place without good reason or lawful excuse. An exemption applies to folding pocket knives with a blade of less than three inches. The Government supports operations by the Police and Trading Standards Officers to enforce this legislation.

Metropolitan Police

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the rate of Metropolitan police officer abstractions was from each London borough for *(a)* counter-terrorism, *(b)* special operations and *(c)* public order event policing work in each of the last 12 months; what the average was for each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [151075]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The numbers of Metropolitan police officer abstractions from each London borough for counter-terrorism, public order and other event policing work during the last 12 months and average abstractions for each borough for the last three years are shown in the following tables. These statistics are taken from data stored within the Public Order Strategic Management Information System held by the Metropolitan Police.

Information on abstraction by borough prior to 2001 is not available.

Number of constables abstracted for Counter Terrorism (Ceremonial, Royal visits and security Events) from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003

	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*
Barking and Dagenham	2	32	154	361	194	166	109
Barnet	4	94	205	457	221	290	126
Belgravia	0	90	144	260	145	122	76
Bexley	0	53	128	361	129	167	86
Brent	1	176	55	339	265	283	148
Bromley	0	86	185	544	210	247	100
Camden	4	159	243	534	423	339	103
Charing Cross	8	123	124	198	128	102	116
Croydon	0	108	185	553	316	360	89
Ealing	0	218	184	456	166	323	103
Enfield	2	82	201	472	168	257	43
Greenwich	0	80	223	567	404	340	198
Hackney	0	89	109	326	307	332	52
Hammersmith and Fulham	0	111	41	230	56	81	73
Haringey	2	89	69	241	249	346	76
Harrow	0	95	121	276	62	153	86
Havering	2	35	164	377	235	205	70
Hillingdon	0	255	190	500	237	257	25
Hounslow	0	232	156	503	90	255	108
Islington	6	108	184	404	201	310	110
Kensington and Chelsea	0	141	186	415	313	284	104
Kingston	0	71	105	239	214	130	23
Lambeth	13	280	188	780	504	372	186

Number of constables abstracted for Counter Terrorism (Ceremonial, Royal visits and security Events) from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Lewisham	0	88	182	436	191	302	83
Marylebone	0	89	101	240	65	140	104
Merton	0	77	119	259	99	47	33
Newham	8	60	473	921	154	178	140
Paddington	0	83	107	187	70	51	79
Redbridge	6	76	68	288	153	183	98
Richmond	1	109	118	242	88	130	71
Southwark	0	247	143	654	442	371	145
Sutton and Epsom	0	97	105	323	225	103	86
Tower Hamlets	4	78	370	583	319	371	123
Waltham Forest	0	84	209	438	257	231	62
Wandsworth	0	192	189	427	268	232	59
West End Central	0	110	162	185	284	173	82
Total	63	4,197	5,890	14,576	7,852	8,233	3,375

	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Barking and Dagenham	1	231	18	150	22	1,440
Barnet	14	273	35	333	45	2,097
Belgravia	14	196	62	209	25	1,343
Bexley	0	151	1	169	12	1,257
Brent	37	338	19	335	51	2,047
Bromley	2	209	6	273	21	1,883
Camden	12	234	55	587	49	2,742
Charing Cross	84	432	42	328	47	1,732
Croydon	14	187	6	299	3	2,120
Ealing	30	274	19	350	26	2,149
Enfield	8	290	100	292	18	1,933
Greenwich	1	373	7	289	14	2,496
Hackney	17	400	25	456	66	2,179
Hammersmith and Fulham	7	370	3	306	2	1,280
Haringey	7	427	46	337	19	1,908
Harrow	15	167	12	149	8	1,144
Havering	0	216	25	189	12	1,530
Hillingdon	65	192	0	210	43	1,974
Hounslow	42	159	5	266	25	1,841
Islington	0	346	19	401	58	2,147
Kensington and Chelsea	36	385	12	424	7	2,307
Kingston	35	71	2	146	1	1,037
Lambeth	48	416	57	547	45	3,436
Lewisham	15	387	8	405	9	2,106
Marylebone	14	188	15	262	37	1,255
Merton	7	83	6	169	3	902
Newham	39	468	23	361	23	2,848
Paddington	13	271	23	321	64	1,269
Redbridge	15	267	38	245	20	1,457
Richmond	22	136	2	162	0	1,081
Southwark	50	484	21	527	36	3,120
Sutton and Epsom	14	80	4	141	2	1,180
Tower Hamlets	28	437	61	475	65	2,914
Waltham Forest	21	273	38	269	22	1,904
Wandsworth	21	293	5	344	25	2,055
West End Central	7	254	47	290	43	1,637
Total	755	9,958	867	11,016	968	67,750

Number of constables abstracted for Public Order (includes Public Order, Football and other sporting events) from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Barking and Dagenham	189	102	189	105	99	85	61
Barnet	190	149	261	129	172	64	221
Belgravia	82	31	97	96	47	75	53
Bexley	94	64	158	99	47	46	35
Brent	129	78	226	382	310	122	198
Bromley	132	88	171	150	80	57	95
Camden	197	140	322	225	295	156	162
Charing Cross	162	198	155	138	115	96	89
Croydon	123	158	353	316	135	67	113
Ealing	221	133	244	205	187	166	131
Enfield	217	116	165	148	89	59	341

Number of constables abstracted for Public Order (includes Public Order, Football and other sporting events) from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003

	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*
Greenwich	267	127	243	261	174	89	140
Hackney	285	88	248	425	152	340	144
Hammersmith and Fulham	243	289	352	478	163	129	156
Haringey	182	151	200	481	137	269	319
Harrow	142	81	163	114	142	55	66
Havering	92	87	200	118	147	36	43
Hillingdon	131	75	235	111	116	36	105
Hounslow	165	110	325	212	120	74	84
Islington	303	168	343	217	307	122	168
Kensington and Chelsea	127	92	121	172	77	110	161
Kingston	58	71	139	78	76	81	104
Lambeth	258	212	423	546	222	230	131
Lewisham	201	169	298	203	121	96	173
Marylebone	94	43	176	117	205	112	132
Merton	106	76	140	113	109	286	231
Newham	273	283	248	263	180	78	127
Paddington	54	32	108	76	54	90	66
Redbridge	194	91	185	156	120	116	157
Richmond	78	117	168	124	133	66	38
Southwark	221	142	311	471	191	173	153
Sutton and Epsom	76	33	141	90	56	101	49
Tower Hamlets	255	370	204	134	142	29	126
Waltham Forest	241	166	219	189	207	196	44
Wandsworth	148	117	257	184	108	142	160
West End Central	123	73	172	111	45	70	107
Total	6,053	4,520	7,960	7,437	5,080	4,119	4,683

	August	*September*	*October*	*November*	*December*	*Total*
Barking and Dagenham	178	33	118	56	139	1,354
Barnet	262	103	143	91	179	1,964
Belgravia	156	37	62	29	28	793
Bexley	129	46	82	45	118	963
Brent	409	248	106	174	311	2,693
Bromley	206	78	111	50	127	1,345
Camden	476	361	181	89	365	2,969
Charing Cross	164	92	75	2	137	1,423
Croydon	419	136	171	76	253	2,320
Ealing	406	99	106	292	164	2,354
Enfield	343	130	68	68	285	2,029
Greenwich	279	83	70	85	82	1,900
Hackney	360	174	54	77	489	2,836
Hammersmith and Fulham	389	196	236	242	292	3,165
Haringey	463	253	266	162	448	3,331
Harrow	93	106	91	87	179	1,319
Havering	210	35	63	73	166	1,270
Hillingdon	251	69	79	93	196	1,497
Hounslow	239	103	140	108	191	1,871
Islington	406	237	169	182	357	2,979
Kensington and Chelsea	384	71	174	44	141	1,674
Kingston	144	69	68	34	123	1,045
Lambeth	481	321	221	135	264	3,444
Lewisham	496	190	220	124	261	2,552
Marylebone	323	32	40	54	83	1,411
Merton	252	36	61	34	109	1,553
Newham	510	176	176	141	228	2,683
Paddington	235	53	94	64	112	1,038
Redbridge	390	86	78	147	136	1,856
Richmond	103	101	50	29	133	1,140
Southwark	428	201	199	77	243	2,810
Sutton and Epsom	131	33	74	20	72	876
Tower Hamlets	301	154	60	94	226	2,095
Waltham Forest	318	105	88	95	216	2,084
Wandsworth	314	77	161	70	218	1,956
West End Central	170	52	96	70	86	1,175
Total	10,818	4,376	4,251	3,313	7,157	69,767

Number of constables abstracted for 'Other' events (other than Football, Sport, Public Order, Ceremonial, Royal Visit or Security) from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Barking and Dagenham	34	48	21	27	22	24	182
Barnet	26	39	16	46	22	28	82
Belgravia	12	6	1	17	11	24	43
Bexley	28	25	21	20	10	11	42
Brent	54	38	25	43	34	43	49
Bromley	40	10	21	13	54	63	122
Camden	43	22	4	6	19	10	144
Charing Cross	65	20	11	20	22	11	17
Croydon	27	20	23	20	37	25	79
Ealing	40	171	97	157	55	49	84
Enfield	42	36	21	21	23	23	90
Greenwich	82	24	28	41	30	12	80
Hackney	56	40	25	21	64	42	138
Hammersmith and Fulham	25	7	2	0	18	9	9
Haringey	71	31	57	19	60	60	95
Harrow	36	21	16	37	3	23	4
Havering	39	36	10	26	9	44	90
Hillingdon	47	31	26	28	4	7	43
Hounslow	26	44	33	20	24	28	83
Islington	16	9	1	18	4	21	96
Kensington and Chelsea	20	27	8	20	66	30	73
Kingston	10	1	30	8	25	6	28
Lambeth	62	26	21	29	62	61	254
Lewisham	87	31	21	20	35	24	187
Marylebone	3	27	1	0	3	1	34
Merton	26	8	21	17	3	8	43
Newham	36	49	40	89	40	26	86
Paddington	18	10	16	21	2	24	34
Redbridge	24	33	32	29	14	37	85
Richmond	10	10	70	10	21	39	21
Southwark	42	30	21	20	107	48	204
Sutton and Epsom	18	23	23	20	23	18	45
Tower Hamlets	48	491	126	29	42	71	202
Waltham Forest	122	35	28	28	21	45	106
Wandsworth	28	26	49	20	24	28	65
West End Central	5	7	16	0	10	24	79
Total	1,368	1,512	982	960	1,023	1,047	3,118

	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Barking and Dagenham	46	19	9	22	17	471
Barnet	67	30	52	63	32	503
Belgravia	22	28	38	86	31	319
Bexley	28	38	89	121	71	504
Brent	56	46	196	48	22	654
Bromley	31	38	108	129	88	717
Camden	54	26	23	76	30	457
Charing Cross	23	54	185	138	62	628
Croydon	28	45	90	124	84	602
Ealing	108	54	108	51	33	1,007
Enfield	55	43	32	50	25	461
Greenwich	183	37	119	99	84	819
Hackney	121	40	40	139	43	769
Hammersmith and Fulham	17	21	34	77	27	246
Haringey	46	30	32	92	15	608
Harrow	70	17	17	23	36	303
Havering	66	32	13	18	7	390
Hillingdon	14	11	29	4	12	256
Hounslow	55	27	39	71	28	478
Islington	48	17	226	55	34	545
Kensington and Chelsea	36	56	65	257	172	830
Kingston	18	20	15	26	23	210
Lambeth	97	71	99	238	155	1,175
Lewisham	69	55	117	229	98	973
Marylebone	13	49	68	112	31	342
Merton	25	18	107	153	84	513
Newham	123	50	116	153	101	909
Paddington	26	25	33	58	1	268
Redbridge	61	34	33	30	13	425
Richmond	55	14	22	43	22	337

	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Southwark	176	53	118	240	117	1,176
Sutton and Epsom	21	25	65	94	67	442
Tower Hamlets	82	45	120	163	97	1,516
Waltham Forest	91	51	39	57	31	654
Wandsworth	44	60	105	179	85	713
West End Central	38	50	75	106	62	472
Total	2,113	1,329	2,676	3,624	1,940	21,692

Average monthly number of constables abstracted by borough

	2001			2002			2003		
	Counter Terrorism	Public Order	Other	Counter Terrorism	Public Order	Other	Counter Terrorism	Public Order	Other
Barking and Dagenham	65	50	149	30	77	35	120	113	39
Barnet	81	120	165	58	109	75	175	164	42
Belgravia	103	66	42	45	52	22	112	66	27
Bexley	51	69	154	35	63	68	105	80	42
Brent	124	144	59	82	153	84	171	224	54
Bromley	76	82	171	50	92	59	157	112	60
Camden	138	173	118	88	184	62	228	247	38
Charing Cross	108	105	79	64	98	38	144	119	52
Croydon	89	145	169	67	208	62	177	193	50
Baling	103	157	160	61	185	69	179	196	84
Enfield	132	135	80	45	158	60	161	169	38
Greenwich	14	147	123	66	150	68	208	158	68
Hackney	130	142	208	76	180	92	182	236	64
Hammersmith and Fulham	65	244	103	42	293	29	107	264	20
Haringey	99	194	85	47	230	80	159	278	51
Harrow	84	87	66	28	63	28	95	110	25
Havering	91	80	69	35	77	41	127	106	32
Hillingdon	86	95	94	48	120	41	164	125	21
Hounslow	70	123	108	43	137	41	153	156	40
Islington	106	212	79	62	232	44	179	248	45
Kensington and Chelsea	129	145	85	55	170	55	192	139	69
Kingston	65	68	67	29	70	32	86	87	17
Lambeth	166	215	197	94	268	84	286	287	98
Lewisham	104	184	170	75	189	67	175	213	81
Marylebone	105	88	56	34	74	15	105	118	28
Merton	47	84	142	25	87	26	75	129	43
Newham	153	134	184	70	164	92	237	224	76
Paddington	76	85	54	76	74	11	106	86	22
Redbridge	91	93	110	41	107	50	121	155	35
Richmond	63	66	69	28	79	21	90	95	28
Southwark	151	168	192	102	204	70	260	234	98
Sutton and Epsom	38	50	140	29	53	21	98	73	37
Tower Hamlets	95	126	129	75	167	81	243	175	126
Waltham Forest	123	128	78	44	128	63	159	174	54
Wandsworth	74	133	192	52	155	82	171	163	59
West End Central	102	92	39	47	71	14	136	98	39

Source:
P.O.S.M.I.S.

National Criminal Intelligence Service

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many allegations of corruption received by the National Criminal Intelligence Service have resulted in NCIS reporting these allegations to authorities in a foreign jurisdiction. [151381]

Caroline Flint: There are currently nine entries on the Register of reported allegations. On one occasion National Criminal Intelligence Service has, on behalf of a UK police force, made an enquiry in a foreign jurisdiction relating to one of these allegations.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the National Criminal Intelligence Service *(a)* has provided and *(b)* is intending to produce a problem profile of the offence of bribery of a foreign public official. [151382]

Caroline Flint: The National Criminal Intelligence Service has not provided a problem profile on the specific subject of bribery of foreign public officials, although the issue of corruption is discussed in a number of the wider assessments. There are no current plans for a specific assessment on this topic.

Police (North Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last received a report on policing in North Wales from the Chief Constable of North Wales police. [150468]

Ms Blears: The Chief Constable of North Wales incorporated his annual report for 2002–03 into the North Wales police "Policing Our Communities 2003–2004" publication which was sent to my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary in July 2003. This document can be found at www.north-wales.police.uk.

Police (Cumbria)

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Cumbria Police's local policing teams initiative. [151876]

Ms Blears: In February 2003, the Chief Constable of Cumbria, Michael Baxter, introduced, with the agreement of the police authority, a four-year programme to establish local policing teams in response to demand from the local community. Early signs are encouraging. Those community constables already in place are providing reassurance to the public and helping to develop longer-term strategies to improve people's quality of life in Cumbria.

Police (Early Retirement)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of police officers in each police force has been given early retirement in each of the last four years. [151601]

Ms Blears: Figures relating to the number of police ill-health retirements in forces between 1999–2000 and 2002–03 are given in the table. For greater consistency police ill-health retirements are now measured in terms of the number of retirements per 1,000 force strength.

	1999–2000		*2000–01*	
Force	*Police medical retirements*	*Medical retirements per 1,000 officers*	*Police medical retirements*	*Medical retirements per 1,000 officers*
Avon and Somerset	40	13.6	42	14.0
Bedfordshire	18	17.5	18	17.4
Cambridgeshire	10	8.1	11	8.5
Cheshire	17	8.5	22	10.9
City of London	11	14.9	9	12.6
Cleveland	15	10.6	9	6.3
Cumbria	20	18.5	24	22.9
Derbyshire	12	6.8	12	6.6
Devon and Cornwall	20	7.0	15	5.0
Dorset	10	7.7	12	8.9
Durham	8	5.1	8	5.0
Dyfed-Powys	12	11.5	14	13.2
Essex	51	18.2	34	11.6
Gloucestershire	8	7.2	7	6.0
Greater Manchester	132	19.4	110	16.0
Gwent	25	19.8	16	12.6
Hampshire	20	5.8	17	4.9
Hertfordshire	10	5.7	13	6.8
Humberside	11	5.9	20	10.5
Kent	18	5.6	29	8.7
Lancashire	17	5.3	30	9.2
Leicestershire	22	11.0	28	13.6
Lincolnshire	10	9.0	4	3.3
Merseyside	45	11.0	47	11.5
Metropolitan Police	289	11.4	225	9.0
Norfolk	12	8.7	10	7.0
Northamptonshire	5	4.5	8	6.9
Northumbria	43	11.4	28	7.3
North Wales	15	10.8	31	21.5
North Yorkshire	25	19.5	37	28.2
Nottinghamshire	21	9.4	16	7.0
South Wales	52	17.6	76	24.4
South Yorkshire	24	7.6	30	9.4
Staffordshire	3	1.4	9	4.2
Suffolk	15	13.1	14	12.4
Surrey	14	7.8	18	8.7
Sussex	16	5.7	16	5.6
Thames Valley	19	5.1	20	5.4
Warwickshire	9	10.0	15	16.2
West Mercia	27	14.3	28	14.4
West Midlands	28	3.9	29	3.9
West Yorkshire	45	9.3	44	9.1
Wiltshire	8	7.2	5	4.5
Total	1,232	10.1	1,209	9.8

	2001–02		*2002–03*	
Force	*Police medical retirements*	*Medical retirements per 1,000 officers*	*Police medical retirements*	*Medical retirements per 1,000 officers*
Avon and Somerset	42	13.6	34	10.8
Bedfordshire	8	7.5	7	6.3
Cambridgeshire	10	7.0	8	5.8
Cheshire	22	10.7	25	11.9
City of London	8	10.0	4	4.9
Cleveland	21	14.4	11	7.6
Cumbria	7	6.4	7	6.1
Derbyshire	9	4.9	12	6.0
Devon and Cornwall	19	6.1	9	2.9
Dorset	10	7.0	3	2.1
Durham	15	9.2	11	6.9
Dyfed-Powys	13	11.5	11	9.5
Essex	32	10.8	21	7.1
Gloucestershire	10	8.5	13	10.5
Greater Manchester	57	7.8	33	4.5
Gwent	24	18.0	22	16.3
Hampshire	19	5.3	11	3.0
Hertfordshire	8	4.1	7	3.4
Humberside	11	5.4	10	4.7
Kent	38	11.3	21	6.0
Lancashire	39	11.8	22	6.4
Leicestershire	7	3.4	9	4.2
Lincolnshire	3	2.5	10	8.1
Merseyside	58	14.1	51	12.4
Metropolitan Police	219	8.4	150	5.3
Norfolk	16	10.9	13	8.6
Northamptonshire	6	4.9	3	2.5
Northumbria	33	8.4	21	5.2
North Wales	20	13.3	14	9.0
North Yorkshire	16	11.4	9	6.2
Nottinghamshire	14	6.0	16	6.3
South Wales	50	15.8	33	10.1
South Yorkshire	30	9.4	17	5.3
Staffordshire	24	11.3	22	9.7
Suffolk	13	10.8	12	9.8
Surrey	24	11.9	12	6.2
Sussex	16	5.5	9	3.0
Thames Valley	17	4.4	29	7.4
Warwickshire	7	7.2	8	8.0
West Mercia	28	13.9	20	8.8
West Midlands	30	4.0	21	2.7
West Yorkshire	61	12.5	23	4.0
Wiltshire	3	2.6	15	12.8
Total	1,114	8.8	821	6.2

Police Patrols

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued in relation to *(a)* police officers and *(b)* community support officers patrolling in groups of two or more; and if he will place copies in the Library. [151415]

Ms Blears: Issues relating to patrol, whether carried out by officers or Community Support Officers are operational matters and as such the responsibility of Chief Officers.

I understand that the Assistant Chief Police Officers are considering the issue of advice to Chief Officers on risk assessment in relation to patrol.

Police Pensions

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many former police officers are receiving pensions from each police force; and what the annual cost will be in 2003–04. [151602]

Ms Blears: Specific information relating to each police force about the number of former police officers with pensions is not held centrally. The total number of

police pensions in payment (including ill-health retirees and dependants) at 1 April 2003 was 106,739. The most recent estimate is that about three-quarters of these pensions in payment will be to former officers. The estimated total number of police pensions in payment at 31 March 2004 is 109,502.

The annual cost of police pensions in 2003–04 has not yet been determined. However, in total, forces in England and Wales estimate that their police pension bill for 2003–04 will be £1,234,675,000. As stated in the National Policing Plan 2002, we are exploring the options for a revised system of funding which would bring greater clarity about pensions obligations on individual police authorities.

Police Recruitment

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on each phase of the "Could You?" police recruitment campaign to date; and how many officers have been recruited as a direct result. [151417]

Ms Blears: The first phase of the Police "Could You?" recruitment campaign ran for three years from 2000 to March 2003 and cost just under £16 million. This was the first national police recruitment campaign and it was launched against a background of police numbers which had been steadily falling for years. The campaign was executed on TV, cinema, press, radio and on-line. We cannot say how many police officers were recruited as a direct result of the campaign. While advertising is an important factor in encouraging potential applicants to apply, it is not the only factor. However, we know that interest in the police service rose during and after the campaign and the numbers of police recruits went up after a prolonged period of decline. Three years later we now have record numbers of police officers.

The current recruitment campaign will run from November 2003 to March 2004. The campaign is targeted at women and minority ethnic people who are currently under-represented in the police service. It is also aimed at increasing the number of Special Constables. The campaign will cost just under £5.8 million in total. It includes TV, radio and press advertising and on-line advertising. It also includes production of a recruitment brochure and a recruitment video, PR support for four pilot forces, enhancement of the police recruitment website, and call handling facilities.

It will not be possible to say how many people were recruited as a direct result of the campaign. However, we will be tracking the level of interest in the police service generated by the campaign through the website and call centre. We will also be tracking the visibility of our advertisements, public perception of them, and attitudes towards the attractiveness of a police career through regular surveys.

Police Reform

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of the consultation exercise on police reform launched on 4 November 2003 will be available. [150184]

Ms Blears: The results of the initial consultation exercise on police reform will be made available as soon as possible after the end of the consultation period on 27 January 2004. However, consultation on police reform will be an on-going process and will continue beyond this date. The responses received will be used to develop the reform agenda and we will consult on more detailed options for reform later in 2004.

Rural Policing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what areas in Lancashire meet the requirement for the Rural Policing Fund. [151268]

Ms Blears: The Rural Policing Fund is allocated to police authorities on the basis of population and a measure of sparsity of population. The sparsity measure is calculated at Census enumeration district level, aggregated for the whole authority area. The police authority area as a whole rather than particular parts, qualifies for allocation from the Fund.

Sexual Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces have dedicated anti-paedophile units; and how many officers are working in those units. [151420]

Paul Goggins: Every chief officer of police has dedicated staff and resources to tackling sexual offending against children and child pornography. Separate anti-paedophile units are one way for police forces to organise operations against those who sexually abuse children. However, in some forces officers work within different structures, such as child protection teams, intelligence units or public protection units. Information on the approach adopted by each police force is not held centrally.

In all cases, forces will be supported by the specialised teams working on this issue in the National Criminal Intelligence Service and the National Crime Squad. There is no central record held of the numbers of officers currently engaged in work on the specific issue of child sexual abuse.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional resources have been made available to police forces to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of offenders under section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. [151421]

Paul Goggins: The investigation and prosecution of offenders under section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act will be undertaken within existing resources. Whilst the offence is designed to allow earlier intervention than is possible under the current law, that is, before a child is sexually abused, the investigation of grooming of children for sexual motives is not a new area of responsibility for the police.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less

than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148623]

Fiona Mactaggart: Please see the figures given in the following table, which relate to staff in central Home Office plus Immigration and Nationality Directorate and cover approximately 20,000 staff. The details have been broken down by tax year (6 April to 5 April) with the exception of the current tax year, for which data has been supplied up to 31 January 2004. The Home Office pays Statutory Sick Pay over five days, Monday to Friday. A week has therefore been classed as five days.

Tax year	Less than 5 days	5 to 15 days	16 to 30 days	31 to 60 days	61 to 100 days	More than 101 days	Total cases	Staff totals[1]	Cases of sickness divided by staff levels
								Staff total for 1 April at end of financial year	
1997 to 1998	1,101	639	235	172	75	71	2,293	8,070	3.52
1998 to 1999	1,199	772	259	199	82	71	2,582	7,710	2.99
1999 to 2000	1,380	858	299	177	96	112	2,922	9,270	3.17
2000 to 2001	1,643	1,069	365	220	110	159	3,566	13,020	3.65
2001 to 2002	1,763	1,147	416	295	143	196	3,960	13,550	3.42
2002 to 2003	2,063	1,310	501	376	198	211	4,659	16,157	3.47
2003 to January 2004	1,827	1,094	379	325	185	147	3,957	17,968	—

[1] FTE of permanent staff, core Home Office including IND but not Prison Service or agencies.

Source:
Civil Service statistics for staff totals up to year 2002; after that, provisional figures taken from Home Office PIMMS staff database.

Victim Support (Data Protection)

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department has issued to chief constables in England regarding the disclosure of names and contact details of victims of crime to victim support charities following recent data protection legislation. [150997]

Ms Blears: Guidance regarding the arrangements for referring the contact details of victims of crime to Victim Support by police forces was issued in Home Office Circular 44/2001 of 3 October 2001. This guidance was developed following extensive consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers, Victim Support and the Information Commissioner. It takes into account the requirements of the data protection legislation.

Violent Crime (West Mercia)

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent crimes against people were committed in each year since 1997 in West Mercia. [151360]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the following table.

Numbers of violent crimes[1] recorded by West Mercia police

	Offences recorded
1997[2]	4,213
1998–99[3]	7,964
1999–2000	9,157
2000–01	8,765
2001–02[4]	18,440
2002–03	21,499

[1] In accordance with Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded crime, violent crime comprises offences of violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.
[2] Crimes were recorded on a calendar year basis until 1997, and on a financial year basis thereafter.
[3] The number of crimes recorded in that financial year using the expanded offence coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.
[4] West Mercia Police implemented the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) on 1 April 2001, which was a year earlier than the official introduction across England and Wales on 1 April 2002. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police, with violent crime in particular being affected. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not comparable with previous years.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BBC Charter

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the budget is for implementing the young people's version of the BBC Charter Review consultation; and if she will make a statement. [152396]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* There is no separate budget for consultation of children and young people. The current consultation stage is expected to cost around £325,000 (not including staff costs) and part of this will provide for events, currently being planned, for children and young people.

The consultation was translated by the Children's Rights Alliance for England at no cost to the Department. Graphic design of the accompanying leaflet and an initial print run of 5,000 copies cost a total of £2,454.

We are publicising this consultation via existing relationships, as well as with around 150 organisations with an interest in increasing young people's participation in decision-making. The consultation will also be publicised in the DfES publication, Spectrum, which is distributed to schools.

Licensing

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) whether her Department encourages staged closing times for *(a)* pubs and *(b)* clubs in England and Wales; [151984]

(2) what discussions her Department has had with the Home Office regarding the public order implications of a standard closing time for pubs in city centres in England and Wales. [151985]

Mr. Caborn: Current closing times are matters of legislation and extensions of these hours are matters for consideration by licensing justices under that legislation, on a case by case basis.

The Licensing Act 2003 will, when it is brought into force, allow applicants for premises licences or club premises certificates to state in their application, to the relevant licensing authority, what hours they wish to be authorized to carry out licensable activities and to stay open to the public (these times may be different). Where there are representations, relating to the licensing objectives, from interested parties or responsible authorities about opening hours the licensing authority will, in most cases, have to hold a hearing in order to decide what the opening hours should be. These decisions will be taken on a case by case basis. The 2003 Act does not require and the Guidance, to be issued by the Secretary of State under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 (which will be subject to parliamentary approval), will not promote staged closing times. The Licensing Act 2003 was not designed to replace the peaks of disorder and anti-social behaviour, which currently occur at fixed closing times, with a series of smaller peaks. On the contrary, our aim is to promote, in areas where it is appropriate, generally later (but not standard) closing times for pubs and clubs, which will allow customers to disperse gradually over a longer period. We consider, for these reasons, that the 2003 Act will reduce the concentrations of people leaving premises at the same time and queuing for public transport and fast food, which can lead to disorder under the present system.

The policy underpinning the Licensing Act 2003 was originally developed in the Home Office and, since the policy responsibility was transferred to my Department in June 2001, we have continued to work closely with the Home Office on all aspects of the prevention of crime and disorder that arise in the context of licensing law.

European Regional Development Fund

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money her Department has received from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in each year since 1998; and how much her Department estimates it will receive from the ERDF in each year until 2006, broken down by *(a)* capital and *(b)* resource income. [151951]

Mr. Caborn: The Department does not receive money from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) directly. However, projects in the English regions that fall within DCMS' policy responsibility have received the following amount of ERDF funds in each year since 1998[1]:

	ERDF (£)
1998	62,057,761
1999	47,558,076
2000	37,245,008
2001	41,453,979
2002	41,988,937
2003	52,965,361

We expect that ERDF expenditure on cultural-related projects will remain at broadly this level until 2006.

[1] The Department has been unable to break down the figures by *(a)* capital and *(b)* resource income as the necessary codings have changed year-on-year.

Food/Drink Advertisements

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress her Department has made in reviewing the code of conduct relating to food and drinks advertisements in order to encourage the promotion of healthy eating. [152521]

Estelle Morris: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has a responsibility only in relation to broadcast advertising. It is currently participating in the consultation being undertaken by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on food promotion to children, and the Department of Health's Food and Health Action Plan group, both of which are exploring ways to promote healthy eating. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has also written to Ofcom asking them to examine the adequacy of their codes regulating the content of broadcast advertising of food, in light of the conclusions of the work undertaken by the FSA, the Department of Health and the Health Select Committee's inquiry into obesity. It is principally the responsibility of Ofcom to ensure that there is an appropriate code for the regulation of broadcast advertising and the Secretary of State looks forward to the outcome of their work.

Honours

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to her answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1001W, on honours, if she will name the three individuals who have received an honour since 1999. [151802]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* Alexander Murphy was awarded the OBE in the new year 1999 honours list for his contribution to rugby league football. Both Jason Robinson and Phil Larder were awarded the MBE in the new year 2004 honours list for their achievements in rugby union, but also in recognition of their previous involvement in rugby league at the highest level.

Public Service Agreement

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's progress against its Public Service Agreement to raise significantly, year on year, the average time spent on sport and physical activity by those aged 5 to 16 years. [151926]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* This target was replaced following the 2002 Spending Review with the PSA target that I share with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to increase the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum. Detailed data are now being collected for the first time—for publication in April—on progress against the new target.

Regional Sports and Arts Boards

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many members there are on each *(a)* regional sports board and *(b)* regional arts board; and how many of each are local government councillors. [151950]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is not responsible for appointing the members of the nine regional sports boards and the nine regional arts boards. Sport England (SE) and Arts Council England (ACE) will be able to provide the requested information. The Chair of each regional arts board has a place on the main ACE board, as do three of the SE Regional Sports Board Chairs at any one time on a rotational basis. The Secretary of State has a role in these appointments and a list of current Regional Chairs follows, one of whom is a local government councillor.

	Chairs
Regional arts council chairs	
East	Professor Stuart Timperley
East Midlands	Stephen Lowe
London	Lady Hollick
North East	Paul Collard
North West	Tom Bloxham MBE
South East	Deborah Grubb
South West	Professor Alan Livingston
West Midlands	Dorothy Wilson
Yorkshire	Sir Norman Adsetts QBE
Regional sports board chairs	
East	Robin Miller
East Midlands	Len Jackson[1]
London	VACANT
North East	Tim Cantle-Jones
North West	Andy Worthington
South East	Mary McAnally
South West	Ged Roddy[1]
West Midlands	Vacant
Yorkshire	Peter Price[1,2]

[1] Currently on the national board of Sport England
[2] Member of Sheffield City Council

S4C

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the sums committed by her Department to S4C in each year since 1997; and what the projected sums are for each of the next three years. [151995]

Estelle Morris: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's allocations for S4C for each financial year from 1997–98 to 2005–06 are:

£ millions

	Departmental allocation
1997–98[1]	18.4
1998–99	75.1
1999–2000	75.1
2000–01	75.1
2001–02	76.8
2002–03	80.2
2003–04	85.2
2004–05	92.2
2005–06	92.2

[1] From January 1998, under the new funding formula introduced by the Broadcasting Act 1996, S4C's annual grant ceased to be paid in full in January each year and became payable in instalments. The budget allocation for 1997–98 therefore covered the period January to March 1998 only.

Departmental allocations for 2006–07 have yet to be determined.

S4Cs statutory grant entitlement is calculated on a calendar year basis and may therefore differ from the Department's allocation for the corresponding financial year.

Scottish Gaelic

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the expenditure by her Department on reserved functions relating to Scottish Gaelic since 1999. [151996]

Estelle Morris: The Department has not incurred any expenditure on reserved functions relating to Scottish Gaelic. Responsibility for the Gaelic Broadcasting Fund (GBF) was devolved to Scottish Ministers in June 1999.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the members of the *(a)* National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, *(b)* Public Lending Right Advisory Committee, *(c)* Radio Authority, *(d)* Reviewing Committees on the Export of Works of Art and *(e)* Royal National Theatre were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151816]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

National Museums Liverpool

Position	*Name*	*Start date*	*End date*	*Remuneration*
Chair	David McDonnell	1 April 2000	31 March 2005	No
Trustee	Alan Waterworth	1 April 1999	31 March 2004	No
Trustee	Margaret MacKeith	1 February 2000	31 January 2005	No
Trustee	Sarah Palmer	1 February 2000	31 January 2005	No
Trustee	Eva Wisemark	21 January 2002	20 January 2006	No
Trustee	Professor Gordon McGregor Reid	1 February 2001	31 January 2006	No
Trustee	Christopher Green	1 April 2001	31 March 2006	No
Trustee	Dr. Janet Kear	1 April 2002	31 March 2006	No
Trustee	Gillian Reynolds	1 April 2001	31 March 2006	No
Trustee	Graham Barrie Marsh	1 April 2002	31 March 2006	No
Trustee	Professor John Tarn	1 April 2001	31 March 2006	No
Trustee	The Earl of Derby DL	1 April 2001	31 March 2006	No
Trustee	Viscountess Mersey	1 April 2001	31 March 2006	No

National Museums Liverpool

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Trustee	Councillor Frank Doran	20 April 2002	19 April 2006	No
Trustee	Sir Neil Cossons	14 May 2002	13 May 2006	No
Trustee	Loyd Grossman OBE	21 July 2003	20 July 2007	No
Trustee	Alexis Redmond	24 July 2003	23 July 2007	No

Public Lending Right Advisory Committee

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Chair	Simon Brett	7 August 2003	6 August 2007	No
Member	Gill Coleridge	29 October 2001	28 October 2005	No
Member	Theresa Breslin	18 March 2002	17 March 2006	No
Member	Miranda McKearney	16 May 2002	15 May 2006	No
Member	Dr. James Parker MA PhD	1 August 2001	31 July 2006	No
Member	Robert Froud	20 January 2003	19 January 2007	No
Member	Dr. Maggie Gee	6 August 2003	5 August 2007	No

Radio Authority

Position	Chair
Name	David Witherow
Start date	29 December 2003
End date	28 December 2008[1]
Remuneration	No

[1] Or until wound up, if earlier.

Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Chair	Lord Richard Inglewood	1 December 2003	30 November 2007	No
Member	Pamela Robertson	1 December 2003	30 November 2007	No
Member	Martin Levy	1 March 2003	28 February 2005	No
Member	Timothy Knox	14 March 2002	13 March 2006	No
Member	Dr. David Ekserdjian	14 November 2002	13 November 2006	No
Member	Johnny Van Haeften	28 June 2001	27 June 2004	No
Member	Amanda Arrowsmith	1 February 2002	31 January 2006	No
Member	Catherine Johns	19 February 2003	18 February 2007	No

The National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside has changed its name to National Museums Liverpool. The Radio Authority was subsumed into the Office of Communications (Ofcom) on 29 December 2003 and the Chair alone remains to oversee residual work. The Secretary of State is not responsible for the membership of the Royal National Theatre, which makes its own appointments and can provide details.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the members of the *(a)* Independent Television Commission, *(b)* Library and Information Commission, *(c)* Museum of Science and Industry, *(d)* National Film and Television School and *(e)* National Lottery Charities Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151817]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Independent Television Commission				
Chair	Sir Robin A. Biggam	29 December 2003	31 December 2008[1]	Yes
National Museum of Science and Industry				
Chair	Right Hon. Lord Waldegrave of North Hill	1 July 2002	30 June 2006	No
Trustee	Martin Smith	25 August 1999	24 August 2004	No
Trustee	Professor Ann Dowling	25 August 1999	24 August 2004	No
Trustee	Gregory Dyke	3 October 2000	2 October 2005	No
Trustee	David Rayner	28 January 2002	27 January 2006	No
Trustee	Dr. Anne Grocock	8 March 2001	7 March 2006	No
Trustee	Professor Roderick Smith	23 April 2002	22 April 2006	No
Trustee	Richard Haythornthwaite	6 June 2002	5 June 2006	No
Trustee	Sir Ronald Cooke	6 June 2002	5 June 2006	No
Trustee	Dr. Simon Singh MBE	12 July 2002	11 July 2006	No
Trustee	Lord Puttnam of Queensgate CBE	12 September 2001	11 September 2006	No
Trustee	Sir William Wells	6 June 2003	5 June 2007	No
Trustee	Professor Sir Martin Rees	6 June 2003	5 June 2007	No
Trustee	Douglas Gurr	6 June 2003	5 June 2007	No

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Trustee	Professor Kathy Sykes	10 October 2003	9 October 2007	No
Trustee	Dr. Maggie Semple OBE	10 October 2003	9 October 2007	No
National Lottery Commission				
Chair	Moira Black CBE	16 October 2003	15 October 2004	Yes
Commissioner	Timothy Hornsby	26 March 2001	25 March 2004	Yes
Commissioner	Brian Pomeroy	16 October 2003	25 March 2004	Yes
Commissioner	Harriet Spicer	1 April 2003	31 March 2005	Yes
Commissioner	Josephine Valentine	17 September 2002	30 September 2005	Yes
The Community Fund				
Chair	Lady Diana Brittan CBE	10 May 2002	9 May 2005	Yes
Deputy Chairman	Dame Valerie Strachan	26 July 2003	25 July 2004	Yes
Member England	Steven Burkeman	1 January 2004	31 July 2004	Yes
Member England	Elaine Appelbee	2 August 2001	1 August 2004	Yes
Member England	Richard Martineau	1 November 2001	2 November 2004	Yes
Member N. Ireland	James Kearney	25 July 2003	24 July 2004	Yes
Member N. Ireland	Sheila Jane Malley	1 January 2004	31 July 2004	Yes
Member N. Ireland	Paul Cavanagh	5 September 2001	4 September 2004	Yes
Member Scotland	Douglas Graham	26 July 2003	25 July 2004	Yes
Member Scotland	Kay Hampton	1 January 2001	31 December 2004	Yes
Member UK	Benjamin Whitaker CBE	28 July 2003	27 July 2004	Yes
Member UK	Carole Tongue	1 September 2002	31 August 2005	Yes
Member Wales	Elisabeth Watkins	1 January 2004	31 July 2004	Yes
Member Wales	Jeff Carroll	5 September 2001	6 September 2004	Yes
Member Wales	Taha Idris	1 April 2003	31 March 2006	Yes

[1] Or until wound up, if earlier.

The Independent Television Commission was subsumed into the Office of Communications (OFCOM) on 29 December 2003; the Chair alone remains to deal with residual work. The Library and Information Commission has been replaced by Resource. The Secretary of State is not responsible for the membership of the National Film and Television School, which makes its own appointments and can provide details. The National Lottery Charities Board became the Community Fund in April 2001.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the members of the *(a)* British Tourist Authority, *(b)* Crafts Council, *(c)* English Heritage, *(d)* English Tourist Board and *(e)* Horniman Museum were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151818]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
VisitBritain				
Chair	Sir Michael Lickiss	1 April 2003	31 March 2005	Yes
Trustee	Kumar Muthalagappan	1 April 2003	28 February 2006	Yes
Trustee	Martin George	1 November 2003	31 October 2007	Yes
Trustee	Digby Jones	1 April 2003	31 March 2006	Yes
Trustee	Alan Parker	1 April 2003	31 March 2006	Yes
Trustee	Lady Cobham	7 April 2003	6 April 2006	Yes
English Heritage				
Chair	Sir Neil Cossons OBE	1 April 2000	31 March 2005	Yes
Commissioner	Gillian Drummond	1 April 2002	31 March2006	Yes
Commissioner	Michael Jolly CBE	1 October 2002	30 September 2006	Yes
Commissioner	Prof. David Cannadine	1 October 2001	30 September 2005	Yes
Commissioner	Piers Gough CBE	17 May 2003	16 May 2007	Yes
Commissioner	Manish Chande	1 September 2003	31 August 2007	Yes
Commissioner	Bill Bryson	1 September 2003	31 August 2007	Yes
Commissioner	Elizabeth Williamson	1 September 2003	31 August 2007	Yes
Commissioner	Jane Grenville	14 May 2001	13 May 2004	Yes
Commissioner	The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Leicester	21 January 2002	20 January 2006	Yes
Commissioner	Leslie Peter Sparks	14 May 2001	13 May 2004	Yes
Deputy Chairman	Andrew W. Fane	9 June 2001	8 June 2004	Yes
Commissioner	Richard Morris	16 July 2002	15 July 2005	Yes
Commissioner	Joyce Bridges	1 September 2003	31 August 2007	Yes
Commissioner	Maria Adebowale	1 September 2003	31 August 2007	Yes
Commissioner	Marquess of Douro	1 September 2003	31 August 2007	Yes
Commissioner	Michael Cairns	20 September 2003	19 September 2007	Yes
England Marketing Advisory Board				
Chair	Hugh Taylor	1 April 2003	31 March2005	Yes
Trustee	Brian Summers	1 May 2003	30 April 2006	Yes
Trustee	John Govett	1 May 2003	30 April 2006	Yes

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Trustee	Suzanne Bond	1 May 2003	30 April 2006	Yes
Trustee	Tim Cantle-Jones	1 August 2003	31 July 2006	Yes
Trustee	Nicholas Cust	1 September 2003	31 August 2006	Yes
Horniman—Public Museum and Public Park Trust				
Chair	Donald Kirkham CBE	23 September 1999	31 March2004	No
Trustee	Susan Minter	1 February 2000	31 January 2004	No
Trustee	Timothy Hornsby	18 July 2003	1 April 2004	No
Trustee	Michael Wheeler	18 September 2000	17 September 2004	No
Trustee	Prof. Kenneth J. Gregory	1 October 2001	30 September 2005	No
Trustee	John Mack	21 September 2002	20 September 2006	No
Trustee	Dame Jocelyn Barrow DBE	22 September 2003	21 September 2007	No
Trustee	Genie Turton	23 September 2003	22 September 2007	No

The British Tourist Authority became VisitBritain on 1 April 2003. The Secretary of State is not responsible for the membership of the Crafts Council, which makes its own appointments and can provide details. The English Tourism Council is now known as the England Marketing Advisory Board.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the members of the *(a)* Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection, *(b)* Advisory Council on Libraries, *(c)* Architectural Heritage Fund, *(d)* Arts Council of England and *(e)* British Film Institute were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151819]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection				
Chair	Julia Somerville	3 September 2003	2 September 2007	No
Member	Margot Heller	3 August 2003	2 August 2007	No
Member	Dr. Richard Dorment	1 January 2003	31 December 2006	No
Member	Penelope Curtis	1 May 2003	30 April 2007	No
Member	Sarah Shalgosky	1 May 2003	30 April 2007	No
Ex-officio	Penny Johnson	1 June 1997		No
Ex-officio	Charles Saumarez-Smith	6 April 1999		No
Ex-officio	Sir Nicholas Serota	6 April 1999		No
Ex-officio	Alan Davey	1 September 2003		No
Ex-officio	Sandy Nairne	30 March 1999		No
Advisory Council on Libraries				
Chair	William MacNaught	3 February 2003	2 February 2007	No
Member	Catherine Blanshard	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	No
Member	Martin Molloy	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	No
Member	Pamela Usher	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	No
Member	Keith Webster	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	No
Member	Jane Hall	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	No
Member	Patsy Heap	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	No
Member	Peter Marchant	3 February 2003	2 February 2005	No
Architectural Heritage Fund				
Chair	Jane Sharman CBE	10 October 2002	9 October 2007	No
Member Scotland	George McNeill	1 January 2003	31 December 2007	No
Member Wales	John Pavitt	1 October 2003	30 September 2008	No
Trustee	Nicholas Baring	6 April 1999	31 March 2004	No
Trustee	Malcolm Crowder	6 April 1999	31 March 2004	No
Trustee	Merlin Waterson	8 November 1999	7 November 2004	No
Trustee	Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle	1 April 2000	31 March 2005	No
Trustee	Roger Wools	1 April 2002	31 March 2005	No
Trustee	Roy Dantzic	29 June 2001	31 March 2006	No
Trustee	William Cadell	9 October 2002	8 October 2007	No
Trustee	Robert Boas	26 March 2003	31 March 2008	No
Trustee	Colin Amery	30 April 2003	29 April 2008	No
Arts Council England				
Chair	Gerry Robinson	1 February 2001	31 January 2004	No
Member and Chair North West	Tom Bloxham	1 June 2002	31 May 2006	Yes
Member and Chair Northern	Paul Collard	1 June 2002	31 May 2006	Yes
Member and Chair East Midlands	Stephen Lowe	1 June 2002	31 May 2004	Yes

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Member and Chair West Midlands	Dorothy Wilson	1 June 2002	31 May 2005	Yes
Member and Chair Eastern England	Stuart Timperley	1 June 2002	31 May 2004	Yes
Member and Chair London	Sue Hollick	1 June 2002	31 May 2006	Yes
Member and Chair South/South East	Deborah Grubb	1 June 2002	31 May 2005	Yes
Member and Chair South West	Alan Livingston	1 June 2002	31 May 2006	Yes
Member and Chair Yorkshire	Norman Adsetts	1 June 2002	31 May 2004	Yes
Member	Deborah Bull CBE	1 June 2002	31 May 2005	No
Member	William Sieghart	1 June 2002	31 May 2006	No
Member	Elsie Owusu	1 June 2002	31 May 2005	No
Member	Brian McMaster	1 June 2002	31 May 2004	No

Members of the British Film Institute are appointed by the UK Film Council which can provide details of its membership.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the members of *(a)* S4C and *(b)* the Treasure Valuation Committee were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151820]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

S4C

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Chair	Elan Closs Stephens CBE	1 April 2002	31 March 2006	Yes
Members	Carys Howell	1 January 2003	31 June 2006	Yes
Member	Cefin Campbell	1 May 2002	30 April 2004	Yes
Member	Christopher Llewellyn	1 November 2001	31 October 2005	Yes
Member	Eira Davies	1 November 2001	31 October 2005	Yes
Member	Nic Parry	1 May 2002	30 April 2004	Yes
Member	Enid Rowlands	1 April 2003	31 March 2007	Yes
Member	Dafydd Wigley	24 November 2003	23 November 2007	Yes
Member	Roger Jones	24 November 2003	23 November 2007	Yes

The Treasure Valuation Committee

Position	Name	Start date	End date	Remuneration
Chair	Prof. Norman Palmer	3 May 2001	2 May 2006	No
Member	Thomas Curtis	3 May 2001	2 May 2005	No
Member	Mary Sinclair	3 May 2001	2 May 2004	No
Member	Trevor Austin	19 December 2003	18 December 2007	No
Member	Dr. Arthur MacGregor	3 September 2001	2 September 2006	No
Member	Dr. Jack Ogden	1 April 2001	31 March 2006	No

CABINET OFFICE

Parliamentary Questions

25. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the guidance issued to civil servants responsible for drafting parliamentary answers. [152268]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office "Guidance to Officials on Drafting Answers to Parliamentary Questions" sets out the principles that civil servants should follow when preparing draft answers for parliamentary questions. The guidance was revised in September 2002 and re-issued to Departments.

HEALTH

Hospital-acquired Infections

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre of the Health Protection Agency has in place a mechanism for collecting the number of deaths associated with *(a)* bloodstream infections and *(b)* MRSA. [145041]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Protection Agency operates the national mandatory surveillance system for methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bloodstream infections and this does not include information on deaths. Collecting data on deaths is not practical for routine reporting as aggregated data rather than individual patient data are collected. Currently mortality information can only be provided by enhanced surveillance or special studies.

Death certificates are designed to identify the underlying cause of death rather than track healthcare associated infections (HCAIs). The new action plan to reduce healthcare associated infections, Winning Ways, includes a commitment to set up a national audit of deaths from HCAIs.

Health Screening (Overseas Visitors)

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he plans to publish the review of policy regarding health screening for foreigners before they enter or are permitted to stay in this country. [152269]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Cabinet Office is continuing to co-ordinate work between relevant Government Departments, including the Department of Health, to review imported infections and immigration. The review aims to establish the facts about the impact of immigration on public health and national health service expenditure, consider all relevant issues including health screening and propose solutions should action be required. It is on-going and no decisions have been taken yet.

Monoclonal Antibody Drugs

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why the monoclonal antibody drugs *(a)* Cetuximab and *(b)* Bevacizumab are not available through the NHS. [152011]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* Cetuximab and Bevacizumab are not currently on the United Kingdom market as they are not yet licensed as medicinal products in the UK or European Union.

EU Enlargement

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the impact of settlement in the UK of citizens of EU accession states on demand for NHS services in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 financial years. [150076]

Mr. Hutton: The impact on demand for national health service services will ultimately depend on the numbers of people who might migrate to the United Kingdom from the new member states. Research for the Home Office does not suggest that the numbers will be significant. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration on 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 705W.

Stroke (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether the stroke units in the NHS in Gloucestershire are large enough to accommodate all stroke victims in Gloucestershire needing hospitalisation; and if he will make a statement. [149466]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have made no assessment because in line with our Shifting the Balance of Power policy it is now for primary care trusts in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services, based on the specialised knowledge they have of the local community.

I am assured by Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA that the national health service in Gloucestershire has developed the two specialist stroke units in line with national service framework guidance.

The stroke service links with other services to enable appropriate lengths of stay within the unit to be supported. Patients have access to other support services including intermediate care to enable rehabilitation of people in their own homes or in community hospitals. As a result of service reconfiguration, the numbers of people accessing specialist stroke services have increased in the last year.

Higher Education Funding

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether courses attracting payment of tuition fees by the NHS will attract payment of top-up fees. [145029]

Mr. Hutton: Existing contracts between strategic health authorities and higher education institutions for nursing, midwifery and allied health professional training, cover the full cost of that training, including tuition. The consultation document "Funding Learning and Development for the Healthcare Workforce" sets out our proposal for a national model contract. It is intended that this contract for national health service funded pre-registration courses, to be introduced from 1 April 2004, will specifically prohibit the charging of variable fees to students.

In the case of medical and dental training, the NHS currently meets students' liability for a contribution to tuition fees for the later years of the course. There is as yet no clear indication from the higher education sector of the scope or scale of any increases that they may intend to make to these fees. The Department of Health will continue to monitor demand for, and take up of, places on courses in medicine and dentistry after the introduction of variable fees in 2006–07. It will consider, in consultation with the Department for Education and Skills, any measures it deems necessary to safeguard the supply, retention, diversity or quality of students on medical and dental training programmes, once the full implications of the introduction of variable tuition fees can be assessed.

TRANSPORT

Driving Instructors

16. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on changes to the rules governing advanced driving instructors. [152286]

Mr. Jamieson: The periodic re-assessment of car driving instructors is already provided for in their registration scheme. We are going to use modern computer-based assessment to check that instructors have kept up to date with the modern syllabus for learning to drive and can demonstrate high levels of hazard perception skills.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what research his Department has commissioned into the benefits of requiring driving instructors to be reassessed after 15 years; [151986]

(2) what discussions his Department has had with the Department of Trade and Industry regarding the implications for driving instructors of a requirement to be reassessed after 15 years. [151987]

Mr. Jamieson: The periodic re-assessment of driving instructors is already provided for in their registration scheme. The frequency of assessments varies according to the standard of the instructor. The higher the standard, the greater the interval until a further re-assessment takes place. Every instructor should have at least one assessment during their four-year period of registration. A research report published in 2000, recommended that the current method of periodic reassessments should be retained. The report made no recommendation that instructors should be reassessed at 15 year intervals. In the circumstances, we see no need to hold discussions with the Department of Trade and Industry.

Roads

18. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage change he predicts for road traffic volumes by 2010. [152288]

Mr. Jamieson: Road traffic is forecast to grow by between 20 per cent. and 25 per cent. in England between 2000 and 2010.

19. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the factors other than speed which contribute to road traffic accidents. [152289]

Mr. Jamieson: Contributory factors are assessed in a wide range of research projects including in-depth studies of particular accident types, on-the-spot accident investigation, and driver behaviour has been shown to be the key factor. A pilot scheme for assessment of contributory factors in road accidents has been used by some police forces alongside the national road casualty statistics reporting system since 1999.

Buses

20. **Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress with improving bus transport in urban areas. [152290]

Mr. McNulty: The Government are working to improve bus services in urban areas in a number of ways. This includes the recent award of £19.6 million from the Urban Bus Challenge, full or provisional funding of £250 million for major bus schemes under the local transport settlement for 2004–05 and £20 million towards implementing real-time passenger information.

A21

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make a further announcement in respect of the A21 between Flimwell and Robertsbridge. [151297]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* This is a particularly sensitive section of the A21 and it is important to find a solution to the traffic problems, which minimises any damage to the environment and to local communities. My officials now need to discuss the way forward with DEFRA colleagues to identify the right solution. I expect to make an announcement on the way forward when the discussions are completed.

Driving Tests

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the implications of re-testing drivers after *(a)* 10 and *(b)* 15 years;. [151638]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost to public funds of requiring drivers to pass a refresher test to retain their driving licence after *(a)* 10 and *(b)* 15 years. [151639]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* We do not consider that the regular retesting of drivers would be a proportionate measure to deliver road safety benefits. We have made no estimate of the cost to public funds, but requiring all driving licence holders to undergo a periodic retest would be an onerous and expensive obligation, particularly since there is no evidence to suggest that road safety would be improved as a result. Most road accidents are caused by careless or inconsiderate driving, rather than a lack of skill.

Courts already have powers to require those drivers who offend to undergo a driving test. Where a driver is guilty of a serious motoring offence, this involves an extended length driving test.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which of his powers will be transferred to elected regional assemblies where they are introduced; and which body holds each of those powers. [152104]

Mr. McNulty: The transport powers of elected regional assemblies were set out in the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions" (Cm5511).

Elected regional assemblies will be given powers to make Rail Passenger Partnership grants, which is currently the responsibility of the Strategic Rail Authority. They will also be responsible for advising government on funding allocations for local transport, taking over functions currently exercised by regional government offices. In addition, elected regional assemblies will be responsible for a regional transport strategy, which is currently prepared by regional planning bodies and issued by the Secretary of State for planning as part of regional planning guidance.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money was raised in fines from speed cameras in the last year for which records are available in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* the West Chelmsford constituency. [151354]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* In 2001–02 £3,524,120 in conditional offer fixed penalties was collected by the Essex Safety Camera Partnership which includes West Chelmsford, for which separate figures are not available.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money raised in fines from speed cameras during the last year for which records are available, was spent in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* the West Chelmsford constituency. [151355]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* In 2001–02 £3,003,763 from conditional offer fixed penalties was passed to the Essex Safety Camera Partnership for the operation and administration of their safety cameras. The Essex Partnership includes West Chelmsford, for which separate figures are not available.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

European Convention on Contact

Tim Loughton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Government intend to become a signatory to the European Convention on Contact. [152229]

Mr. Leslie: The Government are at present considering the results of their expert consultation on the Council of Europe Convention on Contact. Public consultation will take place in due course. A decision on signature will be made in the light of the consultation responses.

Family Law Act

Tim Loughton: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Government will implement section 11(4) of the Family Law Act 1996. [152228]

Mr. Leslie: On 16 January 2001 the Government announced that they had decided not to implement the provisions of Part II of the Family Law Act 1996, including section 11(4), and that the provisions would be repealed when a suitable legislative opportunity arose.

Land Registration

Paul Flynn: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the conclusion of the Law Commission's report, "Land Registration for the Twenty-First Century: A Conveyancing Revolution", concerning the remnants of feudalism in England and Wales. [152344]

Mr. Lammy: The joint Law Commission and Land Registry report, "Land Registration for the Twenty-First Century: A Conveyancing Revolution", concluded that there was a strong case for creating a clear and comprehensive legislative framework for the holding of land by the Crown and the Royal Duchies, and in relation to their role when land is ownerless. The report also stated that the Commission and Land Registry could not see any good reason for the retention of the remaining aspects of feudalism in England and Wales.

The Law Commission are now considering whether a proposed review of the remnants of feudalism in land law in England and Wales should form part of the Commission's 9th programme of law reform. The programme is expected to be published later this year.

Under Sheriffs

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the implications of the Courts Act 2003 are for the remuneration of Under Sheriffs; [151133]

(2) what steps he has taken to make up shortfalls in Under Sheriffs' remuneration arising from changes introduced in the Courts Act 2003. [151134]

Mr. Lammy: The Courts Act 2003 removes the link between responsibility for High Court Enforcement work and the ceremonial functions of the Shrievalty. The latter attracts no remuneration. The arrangements for remuneration for High Court Enforcement work are unchanged. Where Under Sheriffs do not seek or receive authorisation as High Court Enforcement Officers, they will no longer be obliged to undertake High Court Enforcement work, so the issues of remuneration, or any shortfall in remuneration do not arise.

TREASURY

Respiratory Diseases (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children between five and 15 years died of respiratory-related diseases in each year since 2000. [152555]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tim Loughton, dated 3 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many children aged between 5 and 15 years died of respiratory-related diseases in each year since 2000. (152555)

The latest available data are for 2002. Figures for children aged 5 to 15 in England and Wales in the three years 2000 to 2002 are given in the table below.

Deaths from diseases of the respiratory system,[1] England and Wales, 2000 to 2002[2]

	Children aged between 5 and 15 years of age
2000	62
2001[3]	53
2002[3]	67

[1] Selected using codes 460 to 519 from the International Classification of Diseases Ninth Revision for 2000 and codes J00-J99 from the International Classification of Diseases Tenth Revision for 2001 and 2002.

[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[3] The introduction of ICD-10 for coding cause of death in 2001 means that data for respiratory diseases from this year onwards are not completely comparable with data for earlier years. The data should therefore be interpreted with caution. For respiratory diseases the effect of the change in classification in 2001 is described in a report published in May 2002.*

* Office for National Statistics. Results of the ICD-10 bridge coding study, England and Wales, 1999. Health Statistics Quarterly 14 (2002), 75–83.

Tax Credits

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will review the overpayment of tax credits, in particular to claimants who have overpayments being recovered from their awards at high rates. [149720]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26, "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?", sets out the rules that the Inland Revenue follows when adjusting an award to recover an overpayment.

Teenage Pregnancies

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many teenage pregnancies there were in each year since 2000. [152516]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tim Loughton, dated 3 February 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question on how many teenage pregnancies there were in each year since 2000. (152516)

The numbers of teenage pregnancies in England and Wales, in 2000 and 2001 (the latest year for which figures are available), are shown below. Figures shown are for conceptions to women aged under 18, because the target set by the Government Strategy on Teenage Pregnancy is for this age-group.

Year	*Number*[1]	*Rate*[2]
2000	41,349	44.1
2001	40,964	42.7

[1] 2001 figure provisional.

[2] Rate per 1,000 women aged 15–17 based on population estimates as at September 2003.

Provisional figures for the most recently available year were first published in Health Statistics Quarterly, the latest edition of which also shows provisional estimates for March quarter 2002. This publication is available in the libraries of both Houses. Provisional estimates for the calendar year 2002 will be published in Health Statistics Quarterly later this month.

Birth Rates

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many live births there were in each year since 2000. [152515]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Tim Loughton dated 3 February 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the number of live births in each year since 2000.1 am replying in his absence. (152515)

A table showing data for live births occurring in England and Wales and in the United Kingdom in 2000, 2001 and 2002 is provided in the following table. Figures for 2003 are not yet available.

Live births occurring in England and Wales, and the United Kingdom, 2000–2002

	2000	*2001*	*2002*
England and Wales	604,441	594,634	596,122
United Kingdom	679,029	669,123	668,777

Annual figures for live births are routinely published in Births Statistics Series FM1 for England and Wales and in Annual Abstract of Statistics for the United Kingdom; provisional figures for the most recently available year are first published in Population Trends, the latest edition of which also shows figures for March and June quarters 2003. All three publications are available in the House of Commons Library.

Cancer/Coronary Death Rates

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the latest figures for the death rate from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease are in (i) the Jarrow constituency, (ii) South Tyneside, (iii) Tyne and Wear, (iv) the North East and (v) the UK; and what they were in 1997. [152108]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Stephen Hepburn dated 3 February 2004:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning the latest figures for the death rate from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease in (i) the Jarrow constituency, (ii) South Tyneside, (iii) Tyne and Wear, (iv) the North East and (v) the UK; and what they were in 1997. I am replying in his absence. (152108)

Figures for the Jarrow constituency are not available, as annual mid-year population estimates for Parliamentary Constituencies are not produced by the Office for National Statistics. Figures for the other areas are included in the following table.

Death rates[1] *from cancer and coronary heart disease*[2] *in South Tyneside metropolitan district, Tyne and Wear metropolitan county, North East Government Office Region and the United Kingdom*[3] *1997 and 2002*[4]

Death rates per 100,000 population

	1997	*2002*
Cancer		
South Tyneside	225	226
Tyne and Wear	245	229
North East	235	216
United Kingdom	203	189
Coronary Heart Disease		
South Tyneside	210	138
Tyne and Wear	191	146
North East	197	149
United Kingdom	163	128

[1] Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.

[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for 1997, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2002. The codes used are listed as follows:

Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-9 140–208; ICD-10 C00-C97;

Coronary Heart Disease—ICD-9 410–414; ICD-10 120–125.

[3] Usual residents of these areas.

[4] Deaths occurring in each calendar year in England and Wales, and deaths registered in each calendar year in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Climate Change Levy

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue has been raised by the Climate Change Levy in each year since its introduction. [152072]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton South (Mr. Tynan) on 29 January 2004 *(Official Report)*, column 375. Revenue receipts from the Climate Change Levy are published monthly in Table 2.1D of ONS "Financial Statistics" and annually in Customs and Excise's Annual Report and Accounts. Both are available in the Library of the House.

Annual and monthly figures are also available online at Customs' trade and statistics website: www.uktradeinfo.com in the Statistical Bulletins and Factsheets section.

Customs and Excise (Correspondence)

Mr. Burns: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Chelmsford of 19 October 2003 concerning Mr. C. Silvester, PO Reference 5.09712/2003). [152111]

John Healey *[holding answer 30 January 2004]*: I have replied to a letter dated 19 November 2003 from the hon. Member concerning Mr. Silvester with this reference number.

Financial Services

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans the Government has to remove stamp duty on the financial services sector. [152386]

Ruth Kelly: All aspects of the tax system are kept under review as part of the annual budget process.

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what initiatives are in place to assist the financial services industry to ensure probity and transparency in dealings with the public. [152388]

Ruth Kelly: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has statutory responsibility to promote public understanding of the financial system and to secure the right degree of protection for consumers. The FSA carries out Conduct of Business regulation of all firms doing investment business to ensure, for example, that the information firms provide to investors is clear, fair and not misleading.

Infant Mortality

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the infant mortality rate was in 2003. [152560]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tim Loughton, dated 3 February 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what the infant mortality rate was in 2003. (152560)

The most recent complete year for which infant mortality data is available is 2002, when the rate for England and Wales was 5.2 per 1,000 live births. This covers deaths to babies aged less than one year and excludes still-births.

Annual figures for infant mortality in England and Wales are routinely published in the DH3 series 'Mortality Statistics: Childhood, infant and perinatal'. Provisional figures for the first two quarters of 2003 were first published in Health Statistics Quarterly number 20, Winter 2003 edition (Table 2.1). These publications are available in the libraries of both Houses.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reform Stamp Duty Land Tax on leases. [152607]

Ruth Kelly: All tax rates and thresholds are kept under review by the Chancellor and any changes are announced in the Budget.

Following consultation last year, substantial changes were made to the Stamp Duty Land Tax charge on the rental element of new leases which will help all tenants and will be of special benefit to small and medium sized businesses.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Civil Servants (Disabilities)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made in meeting targets for the proportion of people with disabilities in senior posts in his Department. [146001]

Maria Eagle: Statistical information about senior civil servants with disabilities is available on the civil service statistics website at http://www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics/documents/pdf/disability-oct03.pdf.

This information is also available in the Library. The latest statistics show that at 1 April 2003, there were 12 disabled senior civil servants in the Department, 5.4 per cent. of the total.

Construction Site Accidents

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many serious accidents have been recorded on construction sites in the last 10 years. [148147]

Mr. Browne: The information in the table shows fatal and major injuries in construction reported to HSE under the RIDDOR Regulations during the period 1993–04 to 2002–03.

	Workers	*Member of the public*
Fatal		
1993–94	91	6
1994–95	83	5
1995–96	79	3
1996–97	90	3
1997–98	80	6
1998–99	65	3
1999–2000	81	6
2000–01	105	8
2001–02	80	5
2002–03[1]	71	5

	Workers	Member of the public
Major/non-fatal injury		
1993–94	2,574	116
1994–95	2,627	121
1995–96	2,477	117
1996–97	4,054	405
1997–98	4,326	339
1998–99	4,656	378
1999–2000	4,749	403
2000–01	4,708	316
2001–02	4,595	381
2002–03[1]	4,780	259

[1] The definition of a non-fatal injury to members of the public is different to that of workers.

Notes:

1. Non-fatal injury statistics from 1996–97 cannot be compared directly with earlier years due to the introduction of revised injury reporting requirements (RIDDOR95) in1996.
2. The information available under RIDDOR 95 includes three categories of severity, fatal, defined major injuries and other injuries leading to more than three days absence (over-3-day). RIDDOR specifies serious injuries as (i) a list of major injury conditions for employees and self-employed people (ii) non-fatal injuries for members of the public, which cause a person to be taken from the site of the accident to hospital.
3. Incidents reported are defined under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1985 and1995.
4. Injury statistics are those reported to all enforcing authorities.
5. Construction has been identified using Standard Industrial Classification 1992 division 45.
6. The annual basis is the planning year from 1 April to 31 March.

These and additional figures are available on the internet at http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/pdf/table13.pdf.

Disability and Carers Executive Agency

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to consult Scottish-based groups representing disabled people in setting-up the new Disability and Carers Executive Agency. [152523]

Maria Eagle: Plans for consulting with disability organisations about the agency proposals are in hand. The organisations already contacted by officials include UK disability organisations, some of whom, like the DRC, have a key presence in Scotland. As part of this process, officials have also written to Citizen's Advice Scotland.

Incapacity Benefit

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed Incapacity Benefit for financial years *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03 in (i) the Perth constituency, (ii) Scotland and (iii) the UK. [152524]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the following tables.

New claims for IB/SDA in the periods shown

	Scotland new claims IB/SDA	Great Britain new claims IB/SDA
April 2001 to March 2002	101,400	835,570
April 2002 to March 2003	101,440	812,065

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Incapacity benefit figures include national insurance credits only cases.
3. Figures for Great Britain will include a small number of claimants resident overseas.
4. Figures for Northern Ireland are a matter for the Northern Ireland Office and are not given here.
5. Information regarding the number of claims made in Perth for the financial years requested is unavailable.

Source:

DWP Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples.

Live IB/SDA claims in February 2002 and 2003

	Perth IB/SDA	Scotland IB/SDA	Great Britain IB/SDA
February 2002	3,500	327,300	2,695,600
February 2003	3,600	326,500	2,710,200

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Incapacity benefit figures include national insurance credits only cases.
3. Figures for Great Britain will include a small number of claimants resident overseas.
4. Figures for Northern Ireland are a matter for the Northern Ireland Office and are not given here.

Source:

CDU 100 per cent. counts.

Northern Ireland Troubles

Mr. Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the funding of victims work in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Great Britain will be continued after the end of the current funding in 2004. [142721]

Angela Smith: I have been asked to reply.

Since 1998, Government have committed more than£20 million for victim's initiatives. I am currently consulting on what will be the next phase of victim's policy and funding will be a consideration in that context.

Pension Credit

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many calls were made to the Pension Credit Helpline in each month since April, broken down by *(a)* calls classed as engaged, *(b)* calls answered within periods of 20 seconds and *(c)* length of calls in periods of 10 minutes. [146041]

Malcolm Wicks: The available information is shown in the table.

Calls to pension credit application line—April to December 2003

	Calls received by application line	Calls receiving engaged tone or recorded message	Calls answered within 30 seconds	Average call duration (minutes: seconds)
2003				
April	20,810	0	17,680	12:15
May	32,750	10	32,730	12:03
June	60,240	1,790	57,730	14:05
July	118,220	3,050	112,010	13:09
August	181,860	7,250	177,340	15:19
September	427,900	18,540	352,280	11:27
October	482,780	2,850	429,950	09:35
November	318,280	990	302,400	08:56
December	193,900	30	183,650	08:28

Notes:

1. Numbers of calls are rounded to the nearest 10.

2. The number of calls receiving the engaged tone or a recorded message was unusually high in September due to technical problems with the telephony at one particular site. The number of calls affected by these problems cannot be separated out.

3. The number of calls received is a measure of the total number of calls from customers made to the application line number 0800 99 1234. The number of calls answered within 30 seconds is a measure of all calls answered in application line sites and excludes any calls abandoned by the customer.

Pension Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* research and *(b)* evaluation his Department has commissioned into customer service in the Pension Service since the relocation of pension work from local offices in the South East region to pension centres elsewhere; and if he will make a statement. [151533]

Malcolm Wicks: The Pension Service commissioned BMRB Social Research to conduct research on customers' experience of, attitudes towards and satisfaction with our service in its first year. The survey is an important demonstration of our commitment to understanding and responding to customer requirements and will assist in future service development.

The survey findings are based on approximately 4,300 face-to-face interviews with a random sample of current pensioners, their representatives and future pensioners who had contact with The Pension Service during the first half of 2003. The findings are the first nationally representative assessment of how The Pension Service is delivering to its customers. The report will be published shortly.

In addition, the Department has recently commissioned research to examine service delivery to older people with special needs and customers who represent older people.

The Pension Service will introduce a national mystery shopping programme from April 2004. This will provide an independent, robust, and real time measure of our customer service delivery. It will drive improvement activity in areas of high importance to our customers.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the impact on his Department's budget of contracting the self-employed with immediate effect into the state second pension, in each of the next 20 years. [150454]

Malcolm Wicks: The following table shows the projected increase in expenditure on state second pension to pensioners, if all self-employed people with profits greater than the small earnings exception (and hence who are assumed to pay Class 2 contributions) accrue flat-rate state second pension, based on earnings at the lower earnings threshold, from April 2007 onwards. Costs are shown in £ billion, in 2003–04 prices terms, for the first 20 years in which there would be increased expenditure.

Projected increase in expenditure on state second pension, if all self-employed with profits above the small earnings exception accrue flat-rate S2P from 2007–08 to 2003–04 price terms

	Cost (£ billion)
2008–09	0.0
2009–10	0.0
2010–11	0.0
2011–12	0.0
2012–13	0.1
2013–14	0.1
2014–15	0.1
2015–16	0.1
2016–17	0.2
2017–18	0.2
2018–19	0.3
2019–20	0.3
2020–21	0.4
2021–22	0.5
2022–23	0.6
2023–24	0.7
2024–25	0.8
2025–26	0.9
2026–27	1.0
2027–28	1.1

Notes:

1. The projected increase in S2P expenditure to pensioners shown in the table does not allow for *(a)* offsetting savings in income-related benefits, or *(b)* increased expenditure on S2P paid alongside bereavement benefits to those below state pension age.
2. The projected expenditure has been calculated on a consistent basis to that used for the projections in the Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Fund as at April 2000 (Cm 6008), assuming real earnings growth of 2 per cent. a year. No allowance has been made for the effects of the most recent (2002-based) population projections, or any other information which has become available since the results underlying the Quinquennial Review were prepared.
3. The projected expenditure relates to the GB National Insurance Fund (Northern Ireland has a separate Fund).
4. It has been assumed that the self-employed would not be able to contract out of S2P.

Retirement Pension

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what targets exist for backdated awards of retirement pension; and how many such backdated pension awards there were in each month of the 12 months before the most recently available monthly figures. [149642]

Malcolm Wicks: Entitlement to the state pension is dependent on a claim being made for it and the amount is determined in accordance with the legislation. To aid the claim's process the Department sends out a claim pack to those approaching state pension age inviting them to make their claim. It is for the individual to decide whether or not to claim their state pension at state pension age. Some may choose to defer claiming for a variety of reasons, in which case they could get a higher amount of state pension when they do make their claim. It is therefore not appropriate for the Department to set a target.

However, where a person chooses to make a claim after state pension age, his or her state pension can be awarded for up to three months prior to the date of claim subject to the entitlement conditions.

The Department publicises the time limits for claiming state pension and the effects of not doing so on time.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148628]

Maria Eagle: Information for DSS and ES prior to April 2001 is not available.

The information from April 2001 is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the table. Further information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

	Number of staff claimed SSP
2001–02	32,855
2002–03	35,936
2003–04	29,384

Notes:
1. Figures refer to individual members of staff, some of whom will have claimed SSP on more than one occasion.
2. Figures for 2003–04 are for the year to 31 December 2003.

Winter Fuel Payment

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to extend the Winter Fuel Payment Scheme to people with severe disabilities. [151295]

Malcolm Wicks: Help is already available through disability benefits and the disability premium in Income Support in recognition of the extra costs, including heating, which disabled people may have. There are no plans to extend the Winter Fuel Payment Scheme to disabled people under age 60.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bribery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many reports of concerns of bribery registered by UK companies about foreign competitors have been made by his Department to foreign governments; and to which governments. [151518]

Mr. MacShane: To provide the information requested would involve a manual search of files that would incur disproportionate costs.

Burundi

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking, with reference to recent reports concerning those responsible, to assist the Burundian authorities to bring to justice the perpetrators of the crime against humanity in which Charlotte Wilson was murdered; and if he will make a statement. [151766]

Mr. Mullin: We continue to press the Burundi Government for a full investigation into Miss Wilson's murder and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. We have offered assistance to the Burundi authorities from the Metropolitan Police and have raised the case at every suitable opportunity.

The current security situation and the functioning of the judicial system, as well as the current political climate, make investigations in Burundi very difficult. We are working hard with our international partners and those in the region to bring peace to Burundi. This will help create the conditions in which a thorough investigation can be made.

We have offered Miss Wilson's family all the consular assistance we properly can and shall continue to do so.

Chechnya

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the meetings, their dates and the officials involved at which the issue of human rights abuses in Chechnya were raised by his Government with Russia *(a)* prior to 11 September 2001, and *(b)* since 11 September 2001; and if he will make a statement. [151678]

Mr. Straw: The breadth of UK-Russia bilateral relations are such that to provide detailed information on all meetings before and after September 2001 would involve disproportionate cost and in many cases would not be possible.

The issue of Chechnya has been raised with the Russians at Prime Ministerial, ministerial and official level since September 2001. High-level bilateral meetings over last year included during Putin's State Visit in June, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (Mr. Rammell) meeting with the Russian ambassador in October, and during the Russian ambassador's separate meeting with the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Adviser in October. We have also supported the numerous EU statements since September 2001 on the human rights situation there. As the right hon. Gentlemen would expect, Chechnya also featured in our annual Human Rights talks with the Russians in 2001, 2002, 2003 and will no doubt be raised in this year's talks.

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. A. Faqi;. [149545]

(2) when he will reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. A. Faqi. [151230]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 27 January. I apologise for the delay.

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to M. Din. [151231]

Mr. Mullin: The response to my right hon. Friend's letter of 15 December 2003 was delayed pending checks with the high commission in Islamabad. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 27 January.

Council of Europe

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the United Kingdom and other member states were consulted by the Council of Europe over its decision to produce a hip-hop version of the European anthem; and what the *(a)* purpose and *(b)* cost of this production was. [151796]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 2 December 2003]:* According to the Council of Europe, the purpose of this project was to provide music for different European events and ceremonies and as background music for radio and television programmes with a European theme.

The United Kingdom Government was not consulted. I have been informed that the cost of producing the CD was €7,000. If I had been consulted, I would have said that it was a waste of money.

General Affairs and External Relations Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the outcome was of the General Affairs and External Relations Council held on 26–27 January; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including their voting record; and if he will make a statement. [151974]

Mr. MacShane: The information is as follows:

Outcome of the 26 January 2004 General Affairs and External Relations Council

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I represented the UK at the General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels on 26 January 2004. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for International Development represented the UK for the Orientation debate.

Conclusions were agreed on the Orientation debate; Western Balkans; Georgia; Middle East Peace Process; Afghanistan; Colombia; European Security Strategy; and conflict prevention in Africa.

General Affairs Session

Debate on operational programme of Council activities for 2004

The Council held a public debate on the annual operational programme, which the Irish and Dutch presidencies presented at the December GAERC. The programme aims to build on the work of the Greek and Italian presidencies from 2003. It covers the economic reform agenda, justice and home affairs, and external relations. The debate concentrated on implementation of the European Security Strategy and on conflict prevention in Africa.

Progress of work in other Council configurations

The presidency gave a standard progress report on work in other Councils. The report highlighted the results of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council; the Agriculture and Fisheries Council; the Environment Council; and the Economic and Financial Affairs Council. There was no discussion.

MEPs Statutes

The Council examined a draft Decision of the European Parliament on the Statute for Members of the European Parliament. In June 2003, the Council had indicated that it could not give its approval to an earlier draft of the Statute. In December the European Parliament proposed a number of amendments. The Council failed to reach the necessary qualified majority to agree the Statute. The presidency concluded that he would report this decision back to the EP.

External Relations Session

Orientation debate

The Under-Secretary of State for International Development represented the UK for the annual discussion on the effectiveness of EU external action programmes. This year's discussion was structured around three headings (i) EU leadership in progressing development issues multilaterally, (ii) maximising effectiveness of EU external assistance, and (iii) meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Conclusions were agreed on a number of steps to improve the effectiveness of EU aid; including the introduction of more transparent resource allocation.

Iran

High Representative, Javier Solana, reported on his visit to Iran on 12–13 January. Ministers welcomed steps taken by Iran, in the nuclear area (particularly the signature and implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Non-proliferation Treaty) but underlined the need for Iran to comply fully with the IAEA Board of Governors' November Resolution. The Council agreed to return to the issue after the next report on Iran's nuclear programme by Mohammed El Baradei, the IAEA Director-General. There was also discussion on the current political situation.

China

In line with the mandate of the 12–13 European Council, the GAERC discussed the embargo on the sale of arms to China. It invited the Permanent Representatives Committee and the Political and Security Committee to look into the matter, with a view to returning to the issue later in the year.

Georgia

The presidency reported on the 25 January inauguration of President Saakashvili. High Representative Solana also gave a read out of his 14–15 January visit to Georgia. Conclusions were agreed which: provided for targeted assistance to Georgia, pressed for progress on economic reform and tackling corruption; and mandated the Commission to bring forward a recommendation on the relationship of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to the European Neighbourhood Initiative before the end of the Irish presidency.

Middle East Peace Process

The presidency reported on its recent talks in Israel and Egypt. There was discussion on possible ways forward to overcome the current deadlock. Short Conclusions were adopted on the recent Israel-Hizbollah agreement to exchange prisoners. The

Council expressed the hope that this exchange would clear the way for the resolution of all remaining issues between Israel and Lebanon concerning prisoners.

Western Balkans

The Council adopted Conclusions on the 28 December Serbian parliamentary elections calling for the democratic parties to work together to ensure the early formation of a government committed to the reform agenda and to further progress towards EU membership. Conclusions also welcomed the successful launch of the EU police mission—PROXIMA—in Macedonia and the appointment of new EU Special Representative, Jesen-Peterson.

The High Representative also notified Ministers of the death of Commissioner Sven Frederiksen, the head of EU Police Mission in Bosnia.

Afghanistan

High Representative Solana debriefed on his 14 January visit to Kabul. Conclusions were adopted welcoming the new constitution and calling for increased efforts to restore security ahead of the elections in the summer.

AOB: Colombia

Commissioner Patten gave a report of his recent visit to Colombia.

Immigration

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people entered the UK from *(a)* Venezuela, *(b)* Suriname and *(c)* Bolivia in the latest year for which figures are available. [150805]

Beverley Hughes: I have been asked to reply.

The latest available information shows that a total of 27,900 Venezuelan nationals were admitted to the United Kingdom during 2002.

I regret that it is not possible to identify nationals of Suriname and Bolivia separately in our admission statistics.

Data on passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom are published in the Command Paper 'Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2002' (Cm6053), obtainable from the House Library, The Stationery Office and via the Home Office website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hobpubs1 .html

Intelligence Services

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will initiate a review of the operation of the secret intelligence services. [152314]

Mr. Straw: I am satisfied that the work carried out by the Intelligence Services continues to be an essential tool in protecting the nation's security, for instance, in countering the risks posed by terrorists, international criminals and drug dealers, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Their work is underpinned by legislation, and subject to oversight by the Intelligence and Security Committee and by the Commissioners appointed under the Intelligence Services Act and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. These mechanisms serve to keep their work under continuing review.

Iraq

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria were used to select British companies to carry out reconstruction work in Iraq. [150604]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: There are several different organisations involved in Iraq's reconstruction. British companies have won contracts from a number of these, including the Department for International Development, the Development Fund for Iraq, the US Government and the United Nations. Each organisation has its own criteria for selecting companies. All have used competitive bidding or existing contracts for reconstruction work in Iraq.

I will write to my hon. Friend with further details.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place a transcript of his interview on the Today Programme on 26 January on Iraq in the Library. [151851]

Mr. Straw: Yes.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Special Intelligence Service has interviewed Iraqis who had worked in Saddam Hussein's programmes of weapons of mass destruction-related activities *(a)* prior to March 2003 and *(b)* since May 2003. [151852]

Mr. Straw: It is not the Government's policy to comment on the operations of the Intelligence Services. The Security and Intelligence Agencies are not within the scope of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Paragraph 6, Part 1).

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether evidence of nuclear weapons of mass destruction programme-related activities have been discovered in Iraq by the Iraq Survey Group since the statement to the United Nations Security Council on 27th January 2003 by Dr. Mohamed El-Baradei on the status of nuclear inspections in Iraq. [151968]

Mr. MacShane: In his interim report of 2 October 2003, Dr. David Kay reported that the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) had uncovered evidence that a senior scientist at the Iraq Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. Sa'id, had started work on several small and relatively unsophisticated research initiatives in 2000 that could be applied to nuclear weapons development, and which could have been useful in developing a weapons-relevant science base for the long-term.

Dr. Kay also referred to uncovering evidence of a number of other steps taken by Iraq to preserve some technological capability from its earlier nuclear weapons programme. Iraqi scientists and senior government officials have told the ISG that Saddam Hussein remained firmly committed to acquiring nuclear weapons.

The text of Dr. Kay's interim report can be found on the CIA internet website at www.cia.gov.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what specific steps have been taken by the Iraq Survey Group to follow up the unresolved disarmament issues in respect of *(a)* VX nerve agent, *(b)* thiodiglycol mustard gas precursor, *(c)* anthrax, *(d)* Al Samoud 2 rockets and *(e)* Al Fatah rockets presented to the United Nations Security Council by Dr. Hans Blix on 27 January 2003. [151969]

Mr. MacShane: The Iraq Survey Group is continuing to search for any evidence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and programmes for their production. The Iraq Survey Group produced an interim report on its findings in October 2003.

NATO

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the military preparations for joining NATO of *(a)* Bulgaria, *(b)* Estonia, *(c)* Latvia, *(d)* Lithuania, *(e)* Romania, *(f)* Slovakia and *(g)* Slovenia; and if he will make a statement. [151673]

Mr. Straw: In making the decision to invite the seven countries to join the alliance, NATO evaluated their progress against the areas for reform set out under NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP).

All of the invitees have been in an intensive dialogue with NATO to establish what reforms were necessary in the political and economic, defence and intelligence, resource, security and legal fields. Agreed reform objectives set out in Annual National Plans (ANP) have been reviewed annually with NATO International Staff and Allies.

The UK has provided considerable bilateral assistance to all of the countries and will continue to provide support once they have joined the alliance. This assistance will help to ensure that the invitee countries to NATO can continue their reform programmes and make an effective contribution to the alliance's military and political structures.

Nigeria

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Nigeria about *(a)* increases in Muslim fundamentalism in that country and *(b)* the potential for terrorism; and if he will make a statement. [151948]

Mr. Mullin: We hold regular discussions with the Nigerian authorities at Federal and State level and with others in Nigeria, including religious leaders and NGOs on these issues. We keep developments under careful review.

Overseas Bribery and Corruption

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many reports of bribery and corruption overseas were received from diplomatic posts between November 1997 and February 2002. [151385]

Mr. MacShane: To provide the information requested would involve a manual search of files which would incur disproportionate costs.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many allegations of overseas bribery involving UK companies his Department has received from the US Administration since February 1999; on what dates; and what action his Department took on each allegation. [151390]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for City of York (Hugh Bayley) on 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 512W. We cannot comment on individual reports received in order not to prejudice criminal investigations.

Payments

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the payments in each financial year since 1999–2000 to *(a)* Uzbekistan, *(b)* Turkmenistan, *(c)* Kazakhstan, *(d)* Kyrgyzstan, *(e)* Pakistan, *(f)* Georgia and *(g)* Azerbaijan; what the purpose was of each payment; and if he will make a statement. [151671]

Mr. Straw: Thousands of payments have been made by Foreign and Commonwealth Office Posts and Departments to suppliers in these countries from the financial year 1999–2000 to date. To list all of these payments could be done only at a disproportionate cost.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who the members of the *(a)* British Council, *(b)* Commonwealth Institute and *(c)* Westminster Foundation for Democracy were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151869]

Mr. Mullin: Both the British Council and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy are non-departmental public bodies for which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has responsibilities. The Commonwealth Institute is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. As an independent body, we do not have access to the terms of office of its Board members.

British Council Board: List of Members as of 1 January 2004

	Appointed	*Retires*	*Remuneration (£)*
Baroness Helena Kennedy QC Chair	August 1998	31 July 2004	[1]35,000 pa
Gerard Lemos CMG Deputy Chair	February 1999 D/Chair 1 December 2003	December 2006	—
Zeinab Badawi	1 December 2003	1 December 2006	—
Catherine Eva	April 2001	September 2004	—
Charles Grant	October 2002	October 2005	—
Richard Haythornthwaite	May 2002	May 2005	—
Sir Michael Jay KCMG	January 2002	ex-officio	—
Jude Kelly QBE	October 2002	October 2005	—

British Council Board: List of Members as of 1 January 2004

	Appointed	Retires	Remuneration (£)
Professor Lord May of Oxford OM AC Kt PRS	December 2001	December 2006	—
Professor Tim O'Shea BSc. PhD.	September 2003	September 2006	—
Heather Rabbatts CBE	February 1998	February 2004	—
Sir Robert Smith MP	April 2002	April 2005	[1]

[1] This payment will be discontinued after 31 July 2004. The new Chair, yet to be appointed will not be remunerated.

Westminster Foundation for Democracy: List of members as of 1 January 2004

	Appointed	Retires[1]	Remuneration
Michael Aaronson	19 October 2001	October 2004	Reimbursed expenses
James Arbuthnot MP	23 January 2004	January 2007	Reimbursed expenses
Georgina Ashworth	22 May 1998	August 2004	Reimbursed expenses
James Bewsher	19 November 2003	November 2006	Reimbursed expenses
Frances D'Souza	8 July 2000	July 2006	Reimbursed expenses
Michael Gapes MP, Chair	20 August 2002	August 2005	Reimbursed expenses
Nik Gowing	25 June 1996	May 2005	Reimbursed expenses
Mary Kaldor	7 July 1997	June 2006	Reimbursed expenses
Elfyn Llwyd MP	24 August 2001	August 2004	Reimbursed expenses
Michael Moore MP	31 January 2002	January 2005	Reimbursed expenses
Patrick Smith	19 October 2001	October 2004	Reimbursed expenses
Richard Spring MP	14 June 2000	June 06	Reimbursed expenses
Gisela Stuart MP	5 December 2001	December 2004	Reimbursed expenses
Michael Trend MP	30 June 1999	August 2005	Reimbursed expenses

[1] WFD Governors are permitted to serve a maximum of 3 x 3 year terms. Date shown is end of current term.

Commonwealth Institute
List of members of the Board of Trustees as of 1 January 2004

Ms Judith Hanratty, Chair

The Lord Fellowes, Vice Chair

The right hon. Donald McKinnon, Commonwealth Secretary-General

Mr. Algy Cluff

Mrs. Helen Robinson

The High Commissioners to the United Kingdom of Nigeria, Malta, Tanzania and New Zealand

Sri Lanka

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the outcomes of the six-month pilot scheme under which visa applicants in Sri Lanka were required to provide fingerprints; and if he will publish the findings of the research. [151413]

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Citizenship, Immigration and Counter-Terrorism at the Home Office (Beverly Hughes) will be writing to Members of the Seventh Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation about the six-month trial in Colombo and will be placing a copy of that letter in the Library of the House.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the security situation around Juba, Sudan; and what discussions he has had with the Sudanese Government about the situation. [152397]

Mr. Mullin: We have no particular concerns about the security situation around Juba. Juba has not come up in our recent discussions with the Sudanese Government of the security situation in Sudan.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the advice he is offering to British companies which are either involved or intend to become involved in the oil industry in the Sudan. [152398]

Mr. Mullin: The British embassy in Khartoum receives inquiries from British companies in many sectors, including oil, who are interested in becoming involved in business in Sudan. In response to their requests the embassy has provided briefing on the commercial, political and security situation. In addition to briefings it has on occasion provided security advice to companies interested in operating outside Khartoum.

UN Corruption Convention

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what measures the Government are taking to ensure that the UK will be able to meet its commitments under the UN Convention on Corruption; [151510]

(2) when the UK Government will ratify the UN Convention on Corruption. [151516]

Mr. MacShane: Government officials from, in particular, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Home Office and the Department for International Development are working to ensure that the UK is in a position to meet its obligations under the UN Convention Against Corruption. Once we have ensured that UK legislation and administrative arrangements satisfy these obligations, the UK Government will seek to ratify the Convention at the earliest opportunity.

UN General Assembly Resolutions

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what policy considerations dictated the UK's vote against UN General Assembly resolution 58/51, Towards a Nuclear Weapon-Free World; and if he will make a statement. [151674]

Mr. Straw: Government policy on nuclear weapons remains as set out in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review and the 2003 Defence White Paper. We are committed to working towards a safer world in which there is no requirement for nuclear weapons and continue to play a full role in international efforts to strengthen arms control and prevent the proliferation of nuclear—as well as chemical and biological—weapons.

Resolution 58/51, Towards a Nuclear Weapon-Free World, has been tabled over several years and contains many important elements that we support. However, as we explained in our Explanation of Vote, the text presented to UNGA 58 contained several elements that were inconsistent with the consensus reached at the 2000 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The UK remains committed to the NPT, which we regard as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the UK is taking in support of UN General Assembly Resolution 58/36, on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space; and if he will make a statement. [151675]

Mr. Straw: The UK traditionally votes in favour of an annual UN 1st Committee Resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS).

We have signed and ratified the Outer Space Treaty that places important constraints on the basing of weapons in space, including a prohibition on the deployment of weapons of mass destruction. However, we derive considerable military and security benefits from the use of space, and would not like to see a general prohibition on the military use of space.

In addition, we support agreement of a programme of work at the Conference of Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, which includes issues relating to PAROS. We also participated in a recent informal seminar on PAROS at the CD.

Visa Applicants (Fingerprinting)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the estimated cost is of extending the fingerprinting of visa applicants announced on 21 January. [151414]

Mr. Mullin: The cost of introducing fingerprinting in our visa sections in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda is estimated at £325,000 for the current financial year and £410,000 for the 2004–05 financial year. Costs are being met from the budget allocated to the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate. The costs will include initial start-up expenses such as procurement and deployment of equipment, IT development, additional staff and accommodation changes. Running costs thereafter are estimated at £117,000 per year.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units of affordable housing for *(a)* rent and *(b)* sale were built with funding generated by recycled capital grant in (i) 2001–02 and (ii) 2002–03, broken down by Government Office Region. [152024]

Keith Hill: The total number of affordable housing dwellings built with recycled capital grant in England for 2001–02 and 2002–03 are as follows:

	Rent	*Sale*
2001–02	555	234
2002–03[1]	365	418

[1] Subject to validation

Information on the split of these dwellings by region is being collated. I will write to the hon. Member and make a copy available in the Library of the House.

In addition, Registered Social Landlords built affordable housing dwellings by combining recycled grant with new social housing grant from local authorities or the Housing Corporation. Dwellings produced in this way are not counted in the table and appear in the record of dwellings produced through the Approved Development Programme or the former local authorities' social housing grant programmes.

As well as building additional affordable housing, registered social landlords recycled grant into major repair and improvement of their older, existing housing.

Area-based Initiative Budget

Mr. Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget was for each area-based initiative for *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04, broken down by English region; and what the total budget was for each region in each year. [151878]

Mr. Raynsford: The allocations issued to area-based initiatives totalled by region for the years sought are tabled as follows.

£ million

Region	*Coalfields*[1]	*Community chests*[1]	*European Regional Development Fund Areas*	*Housing market Renewal Pathfinders*[1]	*Liveability*[2]
2002–03					
North East	2.6	2.17	20.34	2.64	0.0
North West	1.1	3.85	57.31	10.56	0.0
Yorkshire and Humberside	5.3	1.95	40.68	5.28	0.0
East Midlands	4.2	1.06	11.09	0.0	0.0
West Midlands	1.6	1.66	24.04	5.28	0.0
East of England	0.0	0.22	5.55	0.0	0.0

£ million

Region	Coalfields[1]	Community chests[1]	European Regional Development Fund Areas	Housing market Renewal Pathfinders[1]	Liveability[2]
London	0.0	3.20	7.40	0.0	0.0
South East	0.2	0.40	1.85	0.0	0.0
South West	0.0	0.47	16.64	0.0	0.0
Total	15.0	14.98	184.90	23.76	0.0

	Neighbourhood Management[1]	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	Neighbourhood Wardens/ Street Wardens[1]	New Deal for Communities	Total allocation
North East	1.9	39.73	1.2	25.27	95.85
North West	2.3	81.18	3.5	26.60	186.40
Yorkshire and Humberside	1.5	45.48	2.05	23.67	125.91
East Midlands	1.3	19.51	1.2	14.86	53.22
West Midlands	0.9	40.51	0	18.27	92.26
East of England	0.4	2.64	1.3	15.05	25.16
London	1.03	61.60	4.6	9.18	87.01
South East	0.60	3.24	1.9	11.17	19.36
South West	1.07	6.11	1.5	41.93	67.72
Total	11.00	300.00	17.25	186.00	

[1] For some programmes not all of the budget has yet been allocated to individual initiatives.
[2] Figures for 2003–04 are for the provisional allocations as agreements have not yet been completed.

£ million

Region	Coalfields[1]	Community chests[1]	European Regional Development Fund Areas	Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders[1]	Liveability[2]
2003–04					
North East	2.8	3.55	24.5	4.0	0.7
North West	1.4	6.49	71.7	28.0	0.8
Yorkshire and Humberside	6.0	3.36	52.0	4.0	0.8
East Midlands	4.8	1.79	14.5	0.0	0.8
West Midlands	1.8	2.89	29.9	8.0	0.8
East of England	0.0	0.34	6.0	0.0	0.7
London	0.0	5.3	9.6	0.0	0.8
South East	0.2	0.58	1.5	0.0	0.8
South West	0.0	0.73	19.2	0.0	0.8
Total	17.0	25.03	228.9	44.0	7.0

	Neighbourhood Management[1]	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	Neighbourhood Wardens/ Street Wardens[1]	New Deal for Communities	Total allocation
North East	2.57	52.97	1.25	31.21	123.55
North West	1.71	108.20	2.76	52.50	273.56
Yorkshire and Humberside	2.52	60.63	1.84	30.06	161.21
East Midlands	1.73	26.00	0.52	24.22	74.36
West Midlands	1.61	53.98	1.38	30.53	130.89
East of England	1.15	3.50	0.91	9.60	22.20
London	0.85	82.04	2.88	62.79	164.26
South East	0.88	4.56	1.26	13.27	23.05
South West	0.73	8.12	0.92	10.82	41.32
Total	13.75	400.00	13.72	265.00	

[1] For some programmes not all of the budget has yet been allocated to individual initiatives.
[2] Figures for 2003–04 are for the provisional allocations as agreements have not yet been completed.

Single Regeneration Budget

In 2001, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) was subsumed into the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) Single Programme ('Single Pot') from which RDAs will continue to fund existing SRB commitments. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's contribution to the RDAs Single Pot is £4,679 million for 2003–06 and £1,523.7 million for 2003–04.

Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs)

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not directly fund URCs as funding is channelled through non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and other delivery agents.

Brownfield Land

Mr. Flight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the Government's commitment to develop brownfield land. [152467]

Keith Hill: The Government want to make the best use of disused brownfield land in and around our towns and cities. This will help to ease pressures on the countryside and avoid urban sprawl. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister wants to create more welcoming and attractive places in which people can take pride. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working closely with English Partnerships to develop a national strategy

for brownfield land. English Partnerships has published the results of the first stage of work on the strategy, which provides a better understanding of what land is available. Through English Partnerships and the Regional Development Agencies we are remediating brownfield land at a rate of over 1,400 hectares a year.

Council Tax

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many applications have been made under section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003 for reductions or variations in the level of council tax payable, broken down by local authority. [152808]

Mr. Raynsford: None. Local authorities do not need to make applications to the Government in order to use the power in section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as inserted by section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003. It is up to local billing authorities to decide whether to use this new provision and to assure themselves that what they are proposing is within their powers.

Cumbria County Council

Dr. Jack Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the Government grant for Cumbria county council was in *(a)* 1996–97, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [152338]

Mr. Raynsford: Formula Grant comprises Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates. Allocations to Cumbria county council were:

(a) £229.1 million

(b) £269.5 million

(c) £293.7 million

The amounts are not strictly comparable because of changes in council functions between years.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage increase in grant would be necessary to bring Cambridgeshire county council up to the full Formula Spending Share for 2004–05. [152328]

Mr. Raynsford: Formula Spending Shares (FSS) and Formula Grant are not strictly comparable as FSS includes an element of assumed council tax and the grant distribution system uses floors and ceilings on grant changes as well as FSS. However, Cambridgeshire would have received 3.87 per cent. more grant in 2004–05 had floors and ceilings not applied.

Market Renewal Pathfinder Budget

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget was for each market renewal pathfinder scheme for *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04, broken down by (i) English region and (ii) pathfinder area. [151880]

Mr. Raynsford: Over the financial year 2002–03 and 2003–04, there has been a budget of £2.66 million for each pathfinder for preparation of a strategic scheme and where considered appropriate by them some early action projects.

For 2003–04 to 2005–06, a market renewal fund of £500 million has been created for the nine pathfinders. So far for 2003–04, Birmingham Sandwell, East Lancashire, Oldham and Rochdale, Merseyside, NewcastleGateshead, North Staffordshire and South Yorkshire have been allocated £4 million to begin action on the ground ahead of scheme agreement.

Manchester Salford is the first pathfinder to complete and agree their strategic scheme. They have been awarded £125 million over the next two-and-a-half years to implement their scheme. Merseyside has recently been awarded £86 million and NewcastleGateshead £69 million. Three other pathfinders have submitted their scheme to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister—East Lancashire, Oldham Rochdale and South Yorkshire—these are currently being assessed and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to announce allocations later this year.

The table summarises funding allocations thus far for 2002–03 and 2003–04 by pathfinder and English region. The figures for Manchester Salford, NewcastleGateshead and Merseyside show funding up until March 2006.

£ million

Region/pathfinder	*Total funding for pathfinder*	*Total funding for region*
North West		
Manchester Salford	127.66	233.64
Merseyside	92.66	
East Lancashire	6.66	
Oldham Rochdale	6.66	
North East		
NewcastleGateshead	75.66	75.66
Yorkshire and the Humber		
South Yorkshire	6.66	9.32
Hull and East Riding	2.66	
West Midlands		
Birmingham Sandwell	6.66	13.32
North Staffordshire	6.66	

Rural Land Use

Mr. Flight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the concept of temporary development which applies to minerals and landfill operations with a restoration condition will remain unchanged by the Draft Planning Policy Statement Number 7—Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. [152465]

Keith Hill: In September 2003 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published a public consultation draft of a new Planning Policy Statement (PPS7), Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. The draft sets out proposed national planning policies to deliver sustainable rural communities by focussing most new development on towns and villages, and through strict control over new development in the open countryside. PPS7 does not propose any changes to the established definition of previously-developed land which excludes land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether land and buildings within the rural land use classification are prima facie protected from development. [152466]

Keith Hill: National planning policies for rural areas are principally set out in Planning Policy Guidance 7 (PPG7), "The Countryside—Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development". This guidance is not based on a rural land use classification. PPG7 advises that building in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or areas allocated for development, should be strictly controlled. Further restrictions on development in Green Belts are set out in Planning Policy Guidance note 2.

It is for the local planning authority in the first instance to determine planning applications for the development of land and buildings in accordance with policies in an adopted development plan for the area, and with regard to national and regional planning guidance.

In September 2003 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published a public consultation draft of a new Planning Policy Statement (PPS7), "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas". The draft sets out proposed national planning policies to deliver sustainable rural communities by focussing most new development on towns and villages, and through strict control over new development in the open countryside.

Social Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report,* column 1464W, which column of the table includes units built or acquired by registered social landlords with recycled capital grant. [152188]

Keith Hill: Dwellings built or acquired by registered social landlords using recycled capital grant funding are included in column A of the table produced on the 22 January 2004, *Official Report,* column 1464W.

Thames Gateway

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have for the adoption of standards for access to *(a)* schools, *(b)* healthcare facilities, *(c)* leisure facilities, *(d)* open spaces, *(e)* shops and *(f)* new jobs in the communities that are planned in the Thames Gateway, Essex area. [152431]

Keith Hill: For the Thames Gateway Essex area and elsewhere, Government planning policy (in particular Planning Policy Guidance 13) is to promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling.

In addition, the Social Exclusion Unit's "Making the Connections" report, published in February 2003, sets out a strategy to help people on low incomes access work, food shops and key public services, notably education and healthcare. This includes the approach of accessibility planning in those areas that produce a Local Transport Plan, where local transport planners and others work together to examine accessibility needs and how to overcome barriers. Accessibility planning is currently being piloted and various accessibility indicators are under consideration.

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how he will ensure that new housing development in the Thames Gateway, Essex area will meet *(a)* flood resistance standards sufficient for the Association of British Insurers and *(b)* high standards of design. [152432]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises the importance of ensuring that new housing development in the Thames Gateway meets flood resistance standards. All new housing is subject to compliance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 on 'Development and Flood Risk'. Furthermore, projects that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is funding in the Thames Gateway are required to undertake an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment and consult with the Environment Agency where there is a potential risk of flooding. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are also meeting with the Association of British Insurers to discuss flood management issues.

To ensure that new housing development meets high standards of design, Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 on 'General Policy and Principles' requires that "good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and should be encouraged everywhere". This policy is supported by our good practice guidance 'By Design'. Projects that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is funding in the Thames Gateway have been selected against thematic objectives, one of which is "to implement a consistent policy of quality design". The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also increased funding for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), who are launching the Growth Areas Housing Quality Forum in March 2004 to disseminate best practice. Furthermore, the Building for Life award has been developed by CABE, the House Builders Federation and the Civic Trust to reward development that incorporates high standards of design.

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether the Thames Gateway area of Canvey Island will receive additional road access before the new housing development planned by the Thames Gateway initiative is completed; [152433]

(2) if he will instruct the Thames Gateway initiative to carry out a feasibility study on the provision of a new terminus station for Canvey Island. [152434]

Keith Hill: The East of England Local Government Conference, the regional planning body that has jurisdiction for the Borough of Castle Point, is currently preparing a new Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England (RPG14). This will cover growth proposals for the local authority areas in South Essex with respect to housing and jobs. It will also provide commentary on the sub-region's transport infrastructure.

It is therefore open to partners to make representations for improved access to Canvey Island through the Regional Planning process, alongside the identification of locations where development should be supported within the region.

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what investigations the Thames Gateway Initiative has carried out into the *(a)* numbers of vehicle movements (i) on to and (ii) off Canvey Island and *(b)* road capacity for access to the Island; [152435]

(2) what investigations the Thames Gateway Initiative has carried out into the *(a)* number of rail passengers originating from Canvey Island and *(b)* the capacity of the rail infrastructure. [152436]

Keith Hill: The Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership that I chair has not undertaken any investigation of the number of vehicle movements to and from Canvey Island, nor the capacity of roads that provide access to and from the Island.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has contributed to the London to Southend Movement Study, commissioned in 2003 by the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership. The outcome of this study has yet to be published.

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning applications for *(a)* housing and *(b)* mixed use development in the Thames Gateway, Essex area have been refused since March 2000 on the grounds of poor design. [152437]

Keith Hill: Information relating to the number of planning applications refused in the Thames Gateway since March 2000 on grounds of poor design is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All Local Planning Authorities within the Thames Gateway and elsewhere, are statutorily obliged to keep information relating to the status of individual planning applications within their area of operation.

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average residential density was of housing developments given planning permission since March 2000 in areas of south Essex which fall within the Thames Gateway. [152439]

Keith Hill: Information relating to the average residential density of housing developments given planning permission in the south Essex Thames Gateway area since March 2000 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All Local Planning Authorities within the Thames Gateway and elsewhere, are obliged to keep information relating to the determination of planning applications within their area of operation.

Thistle Hill Development

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what infrastructure plan has been agreed between Government agencies in relation to additional homes on the Thistle Hill development agreed by the Planning Inspector. [152110]

Keith Hill: The Thistle Hill housing scheme, which is expected to yield approximately 1,000 dwellings, already had planning permission, granted by Swale borough council, but was limited to 340 houses before the new Swale Bridge was opened. The appeal decision made by the inspector on 15 January allows a further 85 houses per year to be built before the bridge opens, up to a maximum of 540.

The contract for the new bridge is expected to be awarded shortly and it should be completed by summer of 2006. The consent for the Thistle Hill scheme requires the applicant to provide contributions for education, including a site for a new school, and various transport improvements including improvements to the nearby Cowstead Corner Roundabout.

The Isle of Sheppey is an important part of the Thames Gateway growth area and the MISC 22 cabinet committee are looking at the broader implications of infrastructure provision across the whole Thames Gateway area. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware of the existing infrastructure problems on the island, particularly in education and primary health care, and these are being addressed by the relevant agencies.

Trafford Council

Mr. Brady: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1097W, which specific *(a)* areas and *(b)* departments of Trafford council were identified as being in need of improvement during the improvement planning process orchestrated by the Audit Commission; and if he will provide details of the programme of follow-up inspections. [152426]

Mr. Raynsford: Details of the improvement priorities for Trafford metropolitan borough council and the programme of follow-up inspections established as a result of the improvement planning process are tabled as follows. The Audit Commission's website lists this information for all single tier and county councils (http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/performance_planning/ImprovementPlanningIsifData.asp). Further details are included in Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council's Best Value Performance Plan.

Authority Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council — *CPA score weak*

Council's Improvement Priorities	*Title or focus of proposed Audit or Inspection activity*	*Outline scope of proposed Audit or Inspection activity*	*Proposed timetable for audit, inspection and other activity (if known)*		*Output of proposed Audit or Inspection activity*	*Organisation(s) undertaking the audit and/or the inspection activity*
			From	*To*		
Strengthening Corporate and strategic planning	Corporate Service and Financial Planning	To assess development of corporate service and financial planning as part of Best Value Performance Plan audit	July 2003	November 2003	Audit Report	Audit Commission
Strengthening Corporate and strategic planning	Corporate Service and Financial Planning	To assess development of medium term financial strategy	January 2004	April 2004	Audit Report	Audit Commission

Authority Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council — *CPA score* weak

Council's Improvement Priorities	*Title or focus of proposed Audit or Inspection activity*	*Outline scope of proposed Audit or Inspection activity*	*Proposed timetable for audit, inspection and other activity (if known)*		*Output of proposed Audit or Inspection activity*	*Organisation(s) undertaking the audit and/or the inspection activity*
			From	*To*		
Strengthening corporate performance improvement and management	Performance Management	Assess improvement in Performance Indicator collection and development of performance monitoring systems	July 2003	November 2003	Audit Report	Audit Commission
Strengthening Human Resources and finance support to the Organisation	Development of Financial Management	Assessment of the effectiveness of the integrated business units including financial management schemes of delegation, human resources management and E-government arrangements	To be agreed	To be agreed	Audit Report	Audit Commission
Strengthening financial and performance improvement monitoring systems	Information Technology and E-government arrangements	Assurance review of new information systems implementation	Ongoing	Ongoing	Audit Report	Audit Commission
Strengthening financial and performance improvement monitoring systems	Information Technology and E-government arrangements	Inspection of Information Technology and E-government Best Value Review	May 2003	July 2003	Inspection Report	Audit Commission
Improving the effectiveness of partnership working	Effectiveness of partnership working	Assessment of partnership working and delivery of outcomes focussing on Local Strategic Partnership	September 2003	December 2003	Audit Report	Audit Commission
Improving the effectiveness of partnership working	Effectiveness of partnership working	Assurance review of post contract arrangement for: Leisure Trust, Learning disabilities partnership	To be agreed	To be agreed	Audit Report	Audit Commission
Improving the effectiveness of partnership working	Effectiveness of partnership working	Continuing assessment of development of Children and Young People's company	Ongoing	Ongoing	Audit Report, Guidance	Social Services Inspectorate, Ofsted and Audit Commission
Transforming the way we support and work with young people and children	Focus on various aspects of support for children and young people	Performance audit to monitor the implementation of change in social services provision for children in care from: residential to home care and responsive to preventative services	June 2003	October 2003	Audit Report	Audit Commission
Transforming the way we support and work with young people and children	Focus on various aspects of support for children and young people	Performance audit to review the statement program for children	May 2003	August 2003	Internal Report	Audit Commission
Transforming the way we support and work with older people	Inspection of Older People's Services	Social Services Inspectorate inspection of older people services including Best Value Review	October 2003	November 2003	Inspection Report	Social Services Inspectorate
Transforming the way we support and work with older people	Focus on various aspects of support for older people	Performance audit of delayed discharge arrangements including associated health bodies	June 2003	August 2003	Audit Report	Audit Commission
Transforming the way we care for and manage places where people live and the way we work through area planning	Focus on care of the environment	Upstream inspection work on-waste Best Value Review including links to street scene Best Value Review	May 2003	July 2003	Internal Report	Audit Commission
Transforming the way we care for and manage the places where people live and the way we work through area planning	Focus on care of the environment	Upstream inspection work on—area regeneration Best Value Review	July 2003	September 2003	Internal Report	Audit Commission Inspection

NORTHERN IRELAND

Broadband

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his latest estimate is of the level of broadband coverage in *(a)* North Down and *(b)* Northern Ireland. [151323]

Mr. Pearson: Based on analysis of information obtained from the public domain, industry sources and service providers, it can be estimated that broadband services aimed at small and medium enterprises and residential users are available to approximately 70 per cent. of households and business sites across Northern Ireland. Figures for North Down are not available. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is actively pursuing the availability of equitable broadband services to 100 per cent. of businesses and households by the end of 2005.

Car Documentation

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his latest assessment is of the number of car owners driving in Northern Ireland without valid *(a)* car tax, *(b)* insurance, *(c)* MOT certification and *(d)* driving licence; and what steps he is taking to reduce these figures. [151326]

Angela Smith: The information is as follows:

(a) The most recent detailed survey on vehicle excise duty evasion, undertaken in mid-2002, indicated that there were 74,700 unlicensed vehicles in the private and light goods (cars and vans) tax categories.

(b) No detailed information is held on the number of car drivers without valid insurance, but a report produced by the PSNI concerning 107 unlicensed vehicles, under operation Nemesis, in October 2002 indicated that 80 per cent. were also evading insurance requirements. The Association of British Insurers, 51 Gresham Street, London, EC2B 7HQ may have more detailed information on uninsured drivers.

(c) An analysis of data collected in 2002 estimated that 28 per cent. of vehicles of MOT age did not have valid MOT certificates at the date of sighting. This would equate to approximately 150,000 vehicles.

(d) No information is held on the number of car owners driving without a valid driving licence.

A range of measures are in place to reduce vehicle excise duty evasion and indirectly insurance and MOT evasion as valid insurance and MOT documents have to be produced at re-licensing. These include on-going detection by the PSNI and traffic wardens, wheel-clamping, detection by Automated Number Plate Reading cameras, Statutory Off Road Notification, and from 1 January 2004, the introduction of Continuous Registration, which allows detection from the vehicle record. There are also special joint exercises involving the PSNI, HM Customs and Excise, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI) and Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency.

Specific measures to tackle MOT evasion include the introduction of an MOT disc for display at present voluntarily, but which will be made mandatory in 2004–05, on vehicle windscreens, and the intention to issue MOT reminders starting in March 2004.

The detection of those driving without a valid driving licence is a matter for the PSNI and tackled through their on-going programme of enforcement against traffic offences. Reminders are issued by DVLNI to all driving licence holders prior to the expiry of their licence.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150257]

Mr. Pearson: The following tables list the number of Northern Ireland civil service staff at 1 January 1997 and 1 September 2003:

NICS staff by department and grade at January 1997[1]

	Grade 5 and above	*Senior Principal/ Principal Officer*	*Deputy Principal*	*Staff Officer*	*Executive Officer I/ Executive Officer II*
Department of Health and Social Security	45	156	194	353	2,121
Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland	24	273	385	299	989
Department of Education for Northern Ireland	18	80	38	62	157
Department of Environment	43	251	505	793	2,085
Department of Finance and Personnel	43	128	174	218	304
Department of Economic Development	37	137	210	315	897
Northern Ireland Office[1]	46	116	134	154	373
Total	256	1,141	1,640	2,194	6,926

	Administrative Officer	*Administrative Assistant*	*Industrial grades*	*Total*
Department of Health and Social Security	3,125	1,059	2	7,055
Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland	368	390	729	3,457
Department of Education for Northern Ireland	167	61	2	585
Department of Environment	1,338	653	2192	7,860
Department of Finance and Personnel	408	159	1	1,435

	Administrative Officer	Administrative Assistant	Industrial grades	Total
Department of Economic Development	558	276	61	2,491
Northern Ireland Office[1]	356	257	8	1,444
Total	6,320	2,855	2,995	24,327

[1] Includes 187 home civil servants working in the NIO. Figures also include NICS staff working in the NI Prison Service.
Figures include both permanent and casual NICS staff (industrial and non-industrial). Staff on career break are excluded.

NI Prison Service staff (non-NICS) by grade at January 1997

Governor	67
Principal officer	167
Senior officer	244
Officer	2,404

NI Prison Service staff (non-NICS) by grade at January 1997

Auxiliary	68
Night patrol officer	3
Prison civilian	41
Total	2,994

NICS staff by department and grade at September 2003[1]

	Grade 5 and above	Senior Principal/ Principal Officer	Deputy Principal	Staff Officer	Executive Officer I/ Executive Officer II
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development	23	290	504	337	1,205
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	7	27	45	58	189
Department of Education	13	84	56	59	159
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	12	52	102	97	205
Department of Finance and Personnel	38	194	374	436	668
Department of Employment and Learning	10	39	102	163	675
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	35	119	154	166	242
Department of Environment	17	99	222	326	731
Department of Regional Development	20	136	321	492	1,306
Department of Social Development	18	74	180	353	2,681
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	28	49	74	53	62
Northern Ireland Office[1]	52	176	193	245	465
Total	273	1,339	2,327	2785	8,588

	Administrative Officer	Administrative Assistant	Industrial grades	Total
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development	476	524	661	4,020
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	69	58	16	469
Department of Education	173	87	1	632
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	163	95	2	728
Department of Finance and Personnel	821	377	31	2,939
Department of Employment and Learning	553	173	1	1,716
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	165	145	0	1,026
Department of Environment	533	319	137	2,384
Department of Regional Development	603	281	1,771	4,930
Department of Social Development	3,730	1,481	0	8,517
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	96	34	0	396
Northern Ireland Office[1]	391	275	6	1,803
Total	7,773	3,849	2,626	29,560

[1] Includes 226 Home Civil servants working in the NIO. Figures also include NICS staff working in the NI Prison Service. (industrial and non-industrial). staff on career break are excluded.
Figures include both permanent and casual NICS staff

NI Prison Service staff (non-NICS) by grade at September 2003

Governor	39
Principal officer	66
Senior officer	178
Officer	1,332
Auxiliary	1
Night patrol officer	6
Prison civilian	72
Total	1,694

Civil Service

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to decrease sick leave in the Northern Ireland civil service; and if he will make a statement. [150757]

Mr. Pearson: The 11 departments of the Northern Ireland administration have in place a comprehensive range of initiatives aimed at reducing the level of sickness absence, and further work is planned. These are

broadly similar in the Northern Ireland Office. The actions being taken include: the collection of robust statistical information on the extent and causes of absences to inform actions by departments and enable the setting of departmental-specific targets; on-going reviews of policies and procedures to both strengthen the arrangements for ensuring prompt action by management and to assist staff in rehabilitation and return to work; comprehensive guidance for managers and GPs, communicated though a variety of media; mandatory training for line-managers; a strengthened occupational health support; and promotion of health improvement through a number of initiatives.

Coroners (Foyle)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many full-time equivalent coroners practise in the Foyle constituency; what the average coroner to population ratio is in *(a)* Foyle and *(b)* Northern Ireland; and what plans he has to increase the number of coroners available in the Foyle constituency. [151574]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs is responsible for the Coroners Service in Northern Ireland. The Foyle constituency is located within the coroner's district of Londonderry, which comprises the local government districts of Derry, Limavady and Strabane. A part-time coroner and a part- time deputy coroner are currently appointed to this district. Coroners' caseload is based on deaths reported and not on population. In 2002 there were 206 deaths reported in the coroner's district of Londonderry. The average number of deaths reported in the six coroners' districts excluding Greater Belfast was 189. Each of these districts has one part-time and one deputy part-time coroner appointed. The Northern Ireland Court Service will shortly be publishing proposals for improvements to the coroners' service in Northern Ireland, including creating a single, national coroner's jurisdiction in Northern Ireland.

Doctors

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the implications of experienced senior house officers from Northern Ireland who complete their general practitioner registrar training in the United Kingdom outside Northern Ireland remaining in practices in England, Scotland or Wales. [152351]

Angela Smith: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has carried out a review of the medical workforce, which confirms that there is no shortage of general practitioners in Northern Ireland and that the number in training is sufficient to meet current demand. In determining the requirement for general practitioners, allowance is made for the movement of doctors into and out of the service locally.

The position will be kept under review through the Department's workforce planning process.

Employers' Liability Insurance

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to tackle the problem of small and medium-sized businesses which are unable to obtain renewal of employers' liability insurance in Northern Ireland. [152211]

Mr. Pearson: The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) takes the lead on insurance, as it is a reserved matter. DWP recently published an agenda for action in its second stage report on employers' liability insurance. This includes actions such as longer renewal periods by insurers and brokers, and a scheme called 'Making the Market Work' to help trade associations and others access the insurance market more easily.

These actions are being taken forward in parallel in Northern Ireland. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) is already pursuing a range of initiatives aimed at improving the insurability of small and medium sized businesses and strengthening the insurance market in Northern Ireland.

In addition, DETI officials are meeting with the British Insurance Association to explore other possible actions which the industry might take. It is also planned to have discussions with the FSB to identify what further actions their members might take to improve their prospects of securing employers' liability insurance at competitive rates.

Estate Wardens

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many estate wardens have been appointed by the Housing Executive in Northern Ireland to date; and for which areas. [152595]

Mr. Spellar: There are 21 staff in post, including one agency worker and there are two vacant posts distributed as follows:

Area	*Number*
Antrim	1
Armagh	[1]2
Banbridge	1
Ballymena	3
Carrickfergus	1
Coleraine	1
Dungannon	2
Enniskillen (Fermanagh District Office)	1
Larne	1
Lurgan/Brownlow	[1]1
Newry	1
Newtownabbey Office 1 and 2	4
Portadown	2

[1] Plus one vacancy

Film Making

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance has been provided towards film making in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [151184]

Angela Smith: The information is as follows:

(a) In the years in question the following financial assistance was provided towards film making in Northern Ireland.

£

	DCAL	DETI
1998–99	965,850	412,384
1999–2000	1,006,335	571,106
2000–01	816,081	491,855
2001–02	739,911	363,000
2002–03	1,097,324	300,000
2003–04	1,038,459	—
TOTAL	5,663,960	2,138,345

(b) In terms of other assistance, the Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission, which comes under the remit of DCAL, promotes awareness of Northern Ireland locations, crews and facilities to producers nationally and internationally, and promotes films produced in Northern Ireland. It also supports the development and production of films in Northern Ireland and encourages private sector investment in the industry. The Commission provides free advice to film-makers on all aspects of the business, including locations, casting, crews, facilities, safety, finance and trainees.

No other non-financial assistance has been provided to the industry from DETI or Invest NI.

Fly-tipping

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what studies have been conducted into the extent of fly-tipping in Northern Ireland. [151187]

Angela Smith: Environmental Campaigns Limited (ENCAMS) produced a Fly-Tipping Study in 2003 to establish the extent of fly-tipping in the UK during 200–02. This study gave details of trends from 1994 to 2002 including Northern Ireland. ENCAMS (an environmental charity, which runs the "Keep Britain Tidy" campaign and has a regional office in Belfast) has also produced a guide for the public entitled "Fly-Tipping and the Law". Both publications are available on their website www.encams.org/publications and I have arranged for copies to be placed in the Library.

The Environment and Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment and District Councils are working together to design a code of practice for dealing with the issue of fly-tipping.

Government Solicitors

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether solicitors have been retained to draft legislation in respect of water charging. [152213]

Mr. Spellar: No. Assembly Bills introduced by the Northern Ireland Executive during devolution and Orders in Council made under the Northern Ireland Act 2000 while the Assembly is suspended are drafted by the Office of the Legislative Counsel of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

However, the Department for Regional Development has appointed legal advisers to provide specialist expertise on the water industry regulatory, consumer protection and environmental issues to be addressed in the legislation which will be necessary to give effect to the wide-ranging Water Reform agenda.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money was paid to solicitors employed by the Government in the drafting of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 in *(a)* 1999–2000, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 2001–02 and *(d)* 2002–03, broken down by firm. [152214]

Mr. Spellar: The Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 was drafted by the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel. Costs were therefore met within existing Government resources. No payment was made to any private firm of solicitors.

Higher Education

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of school leavers in Northern Ireland went on into higher education in each year since 1997; what steps he is taking to increase these figures; and if he will make a statement. [150675]

Jane Kennedy: Information for the 2002–03 school year is not yet available. The percentages of school leavers entering institutions of higher education are as follows:

	Percentage
1997–98	28.6
1998–99	30.0
1999–2000	30.5
2000–01	32.9
2001–02	35.0

I have no policy to increase, overall, the number of school leavers progressing into higher education. I am, however, keen to increase the number of students progressing from those groups that are currently underrepresented in HE. In particular students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Widening participation in HE by students from these groups is one of the Department for Employment and Learning's key strategic goals. The Department is addressing the issue of widening access to higher education through a number of broad policy directions and through a range of specific actions.

These include an increase in domestic HE provision between 1999–2000 and 2004–05; the introduction of Foundation Degrees; the introduction of a package of student support measures to assist students from low income families; widening participation premia for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities and special initiative funding to develop partnerships between the universities and schools with traditionally low levels of participation in HE.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of school leavers in each of the past five years went on to attend a university in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [150679]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not available in the requested format.

(a)–(c) The percentages of school leavers who went on to attend institutions of higher education in Great Britain are as follows:

	Percentage
1997–98	9.3
1998–99	8.6
1999–2000	7.7
2000–01	8.5
2001–02	9.0

(d) The percentages of school leavers who went on to attend institutions of higher education in Northern Ireland are as follows:

	Percentage
1997–98	18.4
1998–99	20.6
1999–2000	22.0
2000–01	23.5
2001–02	25.0

The following table provides information on the number of 18 and 19-year-olds who enter university for a full-time undergraduate course. Not all of these students will have progressed direct from school to university. Some, for example, will have left school at an earlier age and qualified for university entry through further education.

Northern Ireland domiciled first year full-time undergraduate students aged 18 and 19 entering HE institutions in the UK by country of study 1997–98 to 2001–02

	Percentage	*Total number of students*
2001–02		
Northern Irish Institution	73	
English Institution	15	
Scottish Institution	12	
Welsh Institution	1	
Total	100	9,311
2000–01		
Northern Irish Institution	72	
English Institution	16	
Scottish Institution	12	
Welsh Institution	1	
Total	100	8,933
1999–2000		
Northern Irish Institution	69	
English Institution	17	
Scottish Institution	14	
Welsh Institution	1	
Total	100	8,643
1998–99		
Northern Irish Institution	65	
English Institution	18	
Scottish Institution	16	
Welsh Institution	1	
Total	100	8,577
1997–98		
Northern Irish Institution	64	
English Institution	19	
Scottish Institution	16	
Welsh Institution	1	
Total	100	8,592

Notes:
1. Source of data—Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
2. The latest year of information on enrolments is 2001–02
3. Entrants to HE are based on students on their first year of a course
4. Age as at 31 August
5. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding
6. Information from HESA does not enable the identification of school leavers. For example, some of these students may have progressed to HE via the FE route.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been waiting for *(a)* inpatient admission and *(b)* initial outpatient assessment for orthopaedic surgery for more than (i) one year, (ii) two years and (iii) three years. [152367]

Angela Smith: Waiting list statistics are submitted to the Department at specialty level. The information in this answer relates to people waiting in the trauma and orthopaedics specialty at 30 September 2003 (the most recent information available). Waiting list statistics are collected in three-month time bands for all patients waiting up to 24 months. Patients waiting 24 months or more are grouped together within one category therefore patients waiting three years or more cannot be separately identified.

	One year	*Two years*	*Three years*
Number awaiting inpatient admission	1,725	604	n/a
Number awaiting initial outpatient assessment	6,998	3,352	n/a

Source:
CH1 and CH3

Industrial De-rating

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what research the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment based its assessment that industrial de-rating will not result in widespread job losses. [146310]

Mr. Pearson: Evidence to assist our thinking on the way forward on this issue came from a variety of different sources: for example, studies conducted by DTZ Pieda, Invest NI and CBI as well as submissions made during the public consultation exercise in 2002 by the DETI and DFP Assembly Committees and local economists. The policy paper published in April last year also included a Regulatory Impact Assessment. All this evidence was analysed and considered objectively and the various options were discussed openly with representatives of the business community before a final decision was taken.

Invest Northern Ireland

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many businesses based *(a)* in Northern Ireland, *(b)* in the rest of the United Kingdom and *(c)* outside the United Kingdom have received assistance from Invest Northern Ireland in each year since its formation. [151333]

Mr. Pearson: Information on Invest NI offers of Selective Financial Assistance (SFA) to businesses is as follows:

Location	*Number of businesses*
Northern Ireland	1,284
Rest of the United Kingdom	10
Outside the United Kingdom	22
Total	1,316

Information on businesses assisted by Invest NI through programmes other than SFA is not available for the above locations.

Late Flights

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many flights at Northern Ireland's airports were delayed *(a)* arriving from and *(b)* departing for London in the last month for which figures are available as a result of air traffic control restrictions in London. [151335]

Mr. McNulty: I have been asked to reply.

For December 2003, of the 3,346 arrivals at Belfast City, Belfast International and Londonderry/Eglinton airports, 139 flights were delayed by air traffic control regulations imposed within the London Flight Information Region (FIR). Of the 3,348 departures from those airports, the corresponding figure was 145 flights.

Maternity Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the cost incurred as a result of women from outside Northern Ireland giving birth in local hospitals in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [152362]

Angela Smith: Using an estimate based on average expenditure, the cost to the HPSS of such births was £211,445, excluding private patients, for the financial year 2002–03.

National Stadium

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with *(a)* sports bodies, *(b)* local councils and *(c)* local representatives on the creation of a national stadium in Northern Ireland. [152585]

Angela Smith: The issue of a National Stadium has involved discussions with sports bodies and other relevant interests for some time. You may be aware that I have recently invited the Strategic Investment Board to commission a study to establish if a National Stadium in Northern Ireland is a viable option. It will be part of the brief for the consultants appointed for this work to have discussions with sports bodies and other appropriate interest groups.

Paramilitary Activities

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the financial cost of paramilitary beatings which resulted in long-term NHS treatment of victims in 2003. [152352]

Angela Smith: This information is not available.

Peace II Programme

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much of the funds from the Peace II programme were distributed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in each of the last six months; and how much of these funds was distributed to *(a)* Greenmount Agricultural College and *(b)* Enniskillen Agricultural College. [152216]

Mr. Pearson: The Greenmount and Enniskillen Campuses are now part of the single DARD College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE).

The following table details expenditure under PEACE II measures for which the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is responsible and identifies how much of this expenditure was distributed to CAFRE.

	Expenditure under DARD PEACE II Measures	*CAFRE Expenditure*
July 2003	51,429	
August 2003	831,856	
September 2003	7,689	
October 2003	947,301	
November 2003	9,299,114	8,652,472
December 2003	364,878	

Pension Inquiry Line

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time taken to respond to telephone inquiries made to the Social Security Agency Northern Ireland's pension service inquiry line was in each of the last 12 months. [152092]

Mr. Spellar: Unfortunately, information on the time taken to clear telephone inquiries is not available.

Post-primary Education

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost of setting up and implementing the proposed new Northern Ireland post-primary education system. [152090]

Jane Kennedy: Until specific proposals for new arrangements begin to emerge at local level, it will not be possible to make reliable estimates of costs. I will be looking at the available options and discussing with my ministerial colleagues ways to ensure the necessary resources to enable the new arrangements to be implemented, taking account of the opportunities offered by the Strategic Investment Programme.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of how the proposed new post-primary education system will affect funding for *(a)* schools and *(b)* Further Education colleges. [152091]

Jane Kennedy: The arrangements for funding schools and Further Education colleges will require further consideration in light of the new arrangements. The Government's decisions announced on 26 January provide the context for further work on this issue to be carried out, in consultation with our education partners.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when research will be completed on *(a)* the post-primary pupil profiles and *(b)* new admissions criteria for the proposed new post-primary education system; and whether the research process will be open to full public consultation. [152125]

Jane Kennedy: CCEA is developing and piloting the pupil profile which will apply to both primary and post primary schools. The aim is to have it in place as soon as possible in order to improve the information available to parents.

Research on new admissions criteria, which will produce a list of potential criteria for consideration, is expected to be completed by the end of this year. There will be full consultation on this proposed list.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of how the implementation of the proposed new post-primary education system will affect staff employment levels in *(a)* post-primary schools and *(b)* further education colleges. [152126]

Jane Kennedy: Until specific proposals emerge at a local level it will not be possible to determine the affect on staff employment levels in post-primary schools or in further education colleges. Proposals for new post-primary arrangements will be developed at local level by schools and further education colleges working together to ensure that all pupils have access to the "Entitlement Framework".

Potato Ring Rot

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the costs are of equipment purchased to deal with potato ring rot in the last 12 months. [152217]

Mr. Pearson: I am aware that the recent finding of potato ring rot in Wales posed a significant threat to the potato industry, though no infected stocks of seed or ware potatoes have been identified in Northern Ireland.

Stringent preventative measures to minimise the risk of further spread are already in place. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has however increased its existing preventative actions, including:

Checking and sampling of crops produced from GB seed potatoes in 2003;

Further targeted sampling of GB seed potatoes due to be planted in Northern Ireland in 2004;

Increased monitoring by inspectors at the ports of Belfast, Larne and Warrenpoint of all seed and ware potato imports;

Increased inspections at premises of importers and processors, including inspections of stocks and checks on sources and reliability; and

Meetings with stakeholder representatives and key industry individuals to provide scientific information on the disease and advice on new preventative measures.

The majority of costs associated with these additional measures are DARD staffs' time.

There is little need for equipment to deal with potato ring rot. DARD Science Service secured £6,500 in 2003 from budget to specifically address its laboratory diagnostic capacity following enhanced sampling by the Inspection Service and to accommodate any necessary emergency response to potato ring rot. This has enabled the provision of enhanced diagnostic capability within DARD for both classical and EU prescribed molecular diagnostic protocols in anticipation of an increased sampling regime for potatoes.

Prescription Fraud

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what he estimates the cost was of prescription fraud in Northern Ireland in 2003; and if he will make a statement. [152414]

Angela Smith: It is estimated that the cost of prescription fraud in 2002–03 was £8.3 million. Estimates for 2003–04 will be available by the end of May 2004.

Tackling fraud remains a key priority for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, which has introduced a range of measures to combat exemption fraud. These include setting up a dedicated Counter Fraud Unit, the introduction of fixed penalty charges for patients who misclaim and the creation of the specific criminal offence of evading health services charges.

Rating

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to bring forward proposals in relation to rates in the domestic sector. [152209]

Mr. Pearson: I have already announced that I propose to replace the current rental based domestic rating with a system based on market values and I plan to bring forward detailed proposals on the reform of the domestic rating system before Easter this year.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact of the level of domestic rates in the next financial year in Northern Ireland of the phasing out of industrial de-rating. [152210]

Mr. Pearson: The phasing out of industrial de-rating is scheduled to commence in April 2005 so there is no impact on the level of domestic rates in the next (2004–05) financial year.

Schizophrenia

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the financial cost of schizophrenia in Northern Ireland in the last five years. [152356]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action has been taken by the

South Eastern Education and Library Board to complete the asbestos survey of its estate; when he expects the survey to be completed; and when its findings will be published. [149780]

Jane Kennedy: I understand from the Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board that 62 per cent. of asbestos surveys have been completed to date, 18 per cent. of surveys are currently on-going and all surveys will be completed by May 2004. Information on the survey results for individual schools will be available on a phased basis from February 2004 onwards on request to the Chief Executive SEELB.

Timber

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland by what means the policy for purchasing timber and timber products of *(a)* the Northern Ireland Office, *(b)* the Compensation Agency, *(c)* the Forensic Science Northern Ireland and *(d)* the Northern Ireland Prison Service ensures that they are obtained from legal and sustainable sources. [141338]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Timber purchased by the Northern Ireland Office and its agencies is obtained via contracts established by the Central Procurement Directorate.

The directorate uses the National Building Specification (issued by NBS Services) as its standard technical specification for major construction projects and this has an optional timber procurement clause which is in line with central government policy. The directorate is in the process of adopting this clause for major works and will be introducing similar requirements for other specifications.

Recent contracts for the purchase of wooden furniture have complied with the current Green Housekeeping guidance.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 4 February 2004

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq Survey Group

14. **Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Prime Minister, whether *(a)* he and *(b)* his Ministers have visited the members of the Iraq Survey Group in Basra; and what assessment he has made of their personal safety as they carry out their task. [152508]

The Prime Minister: Neither I, nor my Ministers have visited the Iraq Survey Group in Basra. I and my right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence have visited the headquarters of the United Kingdom Brigade in Basra.

The assessment of the personal safety of Iraq Survey Group personnel must be made by the local commander who can judge the security situation on the ground. The safety of personnel is the over-riding concern during the planning of Iraq Survey Group activities. If necessary, added Force Protection can be provided to the Iraq Survey Group while they conduct missions within the UK Area of Operations.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

National Minimum Wage

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* in Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East have benefited from the minimum wage; and what measures are in place to ensure that employers are paying the statutory hourly minimum wage. [148401]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Based on the Office for National Statistics' low pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that around 1.2 million people in the UK should have benefited from the introduction of the minimum wage in April 1999. We also estimate that between one million and 1.2 million people in the UK should have benefited from the increase in the minimum wage rates in October 2003.

It is not possible to provide estimates specifically for Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East. However, the DTI estimates that around 80,000 people in the North East should have benefited from the introduction of the minimum wage in April 1999 and that between 80,000 and 90,000 people in the North East should have benefited from the increase in the minimum wage rates in October 2003.

The Inland Revenue enforce the minimum wage on behalf on the DTI. If a worker believes they are not receiving the minimum wage they should contact the minimum wage helpline (0845 6000678). All complaints about underpayment, including those from third parties, will be investigated. The Revenue also make use of their own data, including tax credits information, to make proactive visits to employers whom they suspect may not be paying the minimum wage. In 2002–03 the Revenue completed over 6,200 investigations and identified £3.6 million of minimum wage arrears.

Bank of Credit and Commerce International

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the request from the hon. Member for Leicester, East for a meeting on the way the Insolvency Service has dealt with BCCI. [149267]

Mr. Sutcliffe: A reply was sent to my hon. Friend on 13 January 2004.

Bribery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what written guidelines her Department has produced for staff *(a)* in her Department and *(b)* in Trade Partners on how they should respond to allegations of overseas bribery and corruption; on what date these guidelines were published; and if she will place a copy in the Library. [151513]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Guidance on these issues issued in January 2002, February 2002 and March 2003 to relevant staff in both the DTI and what is now UK Trade and Investment, as well as other relevant government departments. Copies will be placed in the Libraries of the House. Background guidance including an information leaflet on bribery and corruption (a copy of which was deposited in the Libraries of the House on 15 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 265W) is also included on the UKTI website www.uktradejnvest.gov.uk. The guidance complements that provided to all Crown Servants in the "Giving Evidence or Information about Suspected Crimes—A guide for Crown Servants". This report was placed in the Libraries of the House on 20 March 1997 under reference dep/3/4876. It can also be accessed at website http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/../..central/2001/crownser.pdf.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many allegations of overseas bribery and corruption her Department has received since 1997; on what dates the allegations were received; and what action her Department took. [151517]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: To provide the information requested would involve a manual search of files which would incur disproportionate costs. Furthermore, we cannot comment on individual reports received in order not to prejudice possible criminal investigations.

Business Start-ups

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the change in the number of successful high growth business start-ups in each year since 1997. [152054]

Nigel Griffiths: The estimated number was as follows:

	Number
1997	12,200
1998	12,200
1999 (provisional)	12,900

These estimates are based on the following definition of HGSU:

> High growth firms are defined as those with 10 or more employees and/or £1 million or more turnover by the further year of trading. There is an inherent four-year lag in the measurement of this target. Further information on progress can be found in the 2003 DTI Autumn Performance Report.

Community Interest Companies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the likely level of demand for community interest companies over the next five years. [151714]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The Regulatory Impact Assessment of the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Bill, published by the Department in December 2003, used a working assumption that initially between 100 and 300 new community interest companies might register each year.

Correspondence

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1446W, when she will write to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North. [152390]

Nigel Griffiths: A response was sent to my hon. Friend on 27 January.

Departmental Recruitment

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent on recruitment advertisements in the press, broken down by publication, by *(a)* her Department, *(b)* quangos under the Department and *(c)* non-departmental Government bodies under the Department (i) in the last year and (ii) since 1997. [145807]

Ms Hewitt: When running recruitment campaigns, my Department uses the most appropriate advertising media, be it national, regional, local, trade magazine or website, depending on the nature of the post to be filled. We use the service of advertising agencies to place our advertisements and to seek appropriate media advice.

Individual management units generally meet recruitment costs from their own delegated budgets and there are no centrally held records of the breakdown of advertising costs.

Fisheries (Compensation)

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications there have been for compensation from former Icelandic waters trawlermen which *(a)* have been successful, *(b)* have been unsuccessful, *(c)* have been put on hold and *(d)* which are pending a decision, broken down by region of the UK. [152393]

Nigel Griffiths: Up to January this year 4,750 trawlermen had been paid a total of £40.7million. A total of 2,973 claims had been assessed as not qualifying for compensation. There are no claims on hold. Following is a breakdown of the numbers of payments and compensation by current area of residence:

£

Location	*Number of payments*	*Amount paid*
Hull	1766	18.4 million
Grimsby	821	5. 5 million
Fleetwood	363	3.1 million
Blackpool	54	404 thousand
Cleethorpes	226	1.6 million
Newcastle	370	3. 6 million
West Yorkshire	237	2 million
Aberdeen	290	1.5 million
Others	623	4.5 million

I regret that there is no breakdown of claims not qualifying for compensation. I have today announced my proposals to extend the scheme list by 21 vessels. Claims from trawlermen who worked on these vessels will be re-examined with additional compensation for those who qualify.

Miners' Pensions

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will announce the minimum payment under the Miners' Pension Fund; and if she will make a statement. [149796]

Nigel Griffiths: The level of pension payments by the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme is a matter for the Scheme's Trustees. In September last year they announced an increase in pensions in line with RPI.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money has been spent investigating companies suspected of having broken the rules on the minimum wage in each year since its introduction. [148173]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Inland Revenue enforce the minimum wage on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The following table gives details of the funding the DTI has provided the Revenue in each year since the introduction of the minimum wage in April 1999.

	£ million
1999–2000	3.5 plus 1.9 start-up costs
2000–01	3.5
2001–02	4.7
2002–03	5.85
2003–04 (forecast)	5.7

Funding in the first two years did not cover overheads, including accommodation costs. Three new

compliance teams were established in 2002–03, as were a number of local enforcement pilot projects to help improve compliance with the minimum wage.

National Power Provision

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she is taking to ensure the integrity of the national power grid. [151260]

Jacqui Smith: Responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the national transmission system rests with the National Grid Company (NGC). NGC have a number of important statutory and licence duties relating to the development and maintenance of their system. The duty for enforcing these licence and statutory obligations rests with Ofgem.

Officials in my Engineering Inspectorate monitor power failures attributed to the national grid on an ongoing basis and they liaise with staff in the transmission companies to ensure adequate remedial measures are put in place. At my request, Inspectors recently completed a formal investigation of the major interruptions on 28 August and 5 September 2003 and the conclusions and recommendations have been shared with the companies. Inspectors will be liaising with the companies over the coming months to ensure the recommendations are implemented.

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to explore the licensing of new nuclear technologies in the United Kingdom. [152041]

Ms Hewitt: No steps are being taken by Government. It is for industry to bring forward any applications for a licence under the provisions of the Nuclear Installations Act 1965.

Online CD/DVD Sales

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on companies selling online competitively-priced CDs and DVDs to residents of the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [152416]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Provided companies are acting legally, online sales of CDs and DVDs will increase competition, providing consumers in the UK with more choice.

Pornographic Messages

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the use of telephone transferred charge calls to propogate unwanted pornographic messages; and if she will make a statement. [152541]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. However the law relating to pornography applies online as it does offline. Unsolicited emails and reverse SMS messages advertising pornographic services are prohibited by the regulations implementing a recent EC Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications, and which are enforced by the Information Commissioner's office. The mobile operators are drawing up a code of practice to cover new forms of content including pornography. Premium rate services continue to be regulated by the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS).

Post Office Banking Services

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the outcome was of discussions with major high street banks on the provision of banking services at post offices; and if she will make a statement. [151989]

Mr. Sutcliffe: As a result of constructive discussions with the major financial institutions, all the high street banks and the Nationwide Building Society are making a very positive contribution to universal banking services, providing customers with free access to basic bank accounts at post offices, and making significant financial contribution (£180 million) to the cost of running the Post Office card account.

Post Office Closures

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure that there is adequate consultation with relevant hon. Members and other interested parties when an urban post office is nominated for closure. [150616]

Jacqui Smith: Proposals for closures of sub-post offices under the urban network reinvention programme are put out to public consultation, including relevant Members of Parliament, in accordance with the code of practice agreed between Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch. In preparing closure proposals, Post Office Ltd. collect a range of information relevant to the provision of post office services in an area. This includes local authority plans, environmental and transport information, local shopping habits and other local developments and features. With the move to area plans, the public consultation period has been extended from four to six weeks during which comments and representations, including new or additional information, can be submitted for consideration by Post Office Ltd. before they reach a final decision. Recent experience of the programme has shown that there is a clear need for Post Office Ltd. to respond promptly to issues raised during the consultation and to explain its decisions more fully. The Government has impressed on the company the urgent need to improve its performance on this aspect of the programme.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the adequacy of the Urban Reinvention Programme's consultation process for closure proposals. [150816]

Jacqui Smith: Recent experience of the programme has shown that there is a clear need for Post Office Ltd. to respond promptly to issues raised during the consultation and to explain its decisions more fully. The Government has impressed on the company the urgent need to improve its performance on this aspect of the programme. There is also an escalation procedure agreed between Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch for

handling disputed proposals which can be applied in the small number of cases where Postwatch opposes the closure proposal.

Public Bodies (Membership)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the members of the *(a)* North West Industrial Development Board, *(b)* South West Industrial Development Board and *(c)* Eastern Region Industrial Development Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151300]

Jacqui Smith: The information is as follows:

(a) North West Industrial Development Board consists of the following members.

Members	*Period of appointment*
John Alcock	1 January 2001 to 31 May 2004
Mrs. Lorraine Clinton—Chair	1 May 2001 to 30 March 2004
Duncan McLellan	1 December 2002 to 30 November 2005
Raymond Charles McManus	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006
William Joseph Mullarkey	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006
Kirit Pathak	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Ruth Isabel Port	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006
George Verghese	1 December 2002 to 30 November 2005
Mrs. Eva Wisemark	1 September 2003 to 31 August 2006
Marcus Wood	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006

(b) South West Industrial Development Board consists of the following members:

Members	*Period of Appointment*
Sue Astbury	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
Ruth Bagley	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006
Peter Alan Courts	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
John Crownshaw	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006
Ian Robert Douglas	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Neville Gibson	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Alan Neil Hayman	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004
Denise Major	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
Richard Morgan	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
Rama Warren Nand-Lal	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006
Victoria Picketing	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006
Nigel Randall	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
Brian Sherwin	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Terence Alan Slater—Chair	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Barbara Speirs	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004

(c) Eastern Region Industrial Development Board consists of the following members:

Members	*Period of appointment*
David Richard Baggott	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
Alan Davies	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006
Robert Downing	1 July 2003 to 3 June 2006
Martin James Gould	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Keith Hamilton	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006
Terence Ralph Hill	1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006
Fiona Hoskins	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2005
Shaz Khan	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
Hugh Lawson	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
Elaine Oddie—Chair	1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004
Laurence John Russen	1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006
Mike Smith	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005

Members of the Industrial Development Boards are not remunerated.

Research and Development (Tax Credits)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many of the claims for research and development tax credits that have been received by the Government have led to the development of a new product, service or process. [152060]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1044W

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made towards the achievement of *(a)* targets and *(b)* delivery of the (i) regional economic strategy and (ii) corporate plan of each of the regional development agencies. [152063]

Jacqui Smith: England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), working with their regional and local partners and stakeholders, have produced Regional Economic Strategies (RESs) which set out the medium to long term vision for the economic development of their regions. They are designed to be implemented by the RDA and by regional partners and stakeholders. Each RDA monitors and reports to its region on delivery of the RES differently but the Annual Report and Accounts, which the eight RDAs outside London are required to produce, outline the achievements and progress made by each RDA. They are laid in Parliament and copies are available in the Libraries of the House. I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 17 July 2003 about the Annual Reports and Accounts for 2002–03. The London Development Agency also produces an annual report and accounts, outlining achievements and progress, which is available on its website.

The Government has agreed a common framework of targets for the RDAs to achieve. (The framework can be viewed on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/rda/in.fo/index.htm.) Target levels are set through the Corporate Planning process and current targets were agreed by Ministers (and, in London, by the Mayor) and published in RDA's Corporate Plans for 2003–2006. The RDA details the activities and initiatives it will undertake in order to help implement the RES, and to contribute to the achievement of the targets set, within its Corporate Plan. Progress on achievement of the Tier 3 output targets is published six monthly and I refer the hon. Member to the statements I made on 7 July 2003 and today.

The Corporate Plans, RESs, and Annual Reports and Accounts are available on each RDA's website.

Seminars

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many seminars the Government has organised for the UK business community since 1997 on *(a)* Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development Convention and Combating Bribery and *(b)* Part 12 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; on which dates and in which locations; and (i) how many and (ii) which companies attended each seminar. [151588]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Since 2002 officials have run seminars or given presentations covering both *(a)* and *(b)* in several locations including those listed as follows. However, accurate numbers and details of those who attended events since 2002, and any information for the period between 1997 and 2002 would involve a search of records and company research which would Incur disproportionate costs.

	Location
January 2002	London, UK
October 2002	Moscow, Russia
January 2003	Birmingham, UK
March 2003	Panama City, Panama
March 2003	Mexico City, Mecico
June 2003	Bogota, Colombia
December 2003	Tehran, Iran
December 2003	Kuwait City, Kuwait

UN Technology Summit

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the oral answer of 6 January to the hon. Member for Inverness, East, Nairn and Lochaber (Mr. Stewart), *Official Report*, column 156, what action she has taken to ensure that, as a result of the UN Technology Summit in Geneva, the benefits of information and communication flow to all in society. [152270]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was held in Geneva on 10–12 December 2003. It focused on increasing the opportunities and allow the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT) to flow to all.

The WSIS Action Plan formally asked that the Secretary General of the United Nations set up a task force to review the adequacy of all existing financial mechanisms to meet the challenges of ICT for development, by 2005. The Secretary General was also mandated to set up a working group on internet governance to investigate and make proposals for action on the governance of the internet, also by 2005, to coincide with the second phase of the Summit.

Preparations for the second phase will start officially with a meeting in the Autumn of 2004, but there will be a series of related workshops and meetings held from this Spring.

From the beginning , the UK encouraged the Summit to create a framework for initiatives to meet local peoples' needs, particularly "enabling partnerships" supported by governments, private sector partners, civil society and local "champions". The UK is already engaged in this partnership approach to reduce poverty and meet our Millennium Development Goals. We will continue to promote this up to the second phase of the Summit in Tunis in November 2005.

Wind Farms

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the contribution of the *(a)* concrete content of foundations, *(b)* losses in transmission and *(c)* the construction of necessary supports infrastructure to the (i) energy and (ii) carbon costs of wind farms. [152448]

Jacqui Smith: Research has shown that a modern wind turbine will recover all of the energy expended in its manufacture, operation and decommissioning within approximately three months. This figure is similar for onshore and offshore wind turbines. Exact figures for energy costs vary depending on the type of turbine, location, etc. However, a reasonable estimate in the construction of an onshore turbine is that *(a)* foundation energy costs account for up to 5 per cent. of the total and *(b)* support infrastructure accounts for less than 20 per cent. The rest is primarily accounted for in the manufacture of the turbine itself.

Over an operating lifetime of 20 years, an onshore turbine is expected to recover over 80 times the input energy required. This figure also includes maintenance energy requirements and transmission losses of 6 to 9 per cent. Carbon savings are dependent on the emissions from electricity that would otherwise have been produced from conventional power stations, but it is reasonable to assume that the lifetime savings will be of a similar multiple. The energy recovery for an offshore turbine is expected to be higher due to higher energy outputs over a longer lifetime.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the additional cost of reinforcing the transmission grid to cope with the addition of wind farm-generated electricity. [152451]

Jacqui Smith: The Transmission Issues Working Group reported in June 2003 that the overall cost to connect an additional 12 GW of renewable energy generation to the GB network would cost £2.1 billion. National Grid Transco, Scottish Power and Scottish and Southern Energy are currently revising these costs.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans he has to regionalise the administration and management of the Civil Service. [152103]

Mr. Alexander: The administration and management of the Civil Service, other than for Senior Civil Service, is delegated to Departments. Sir Michael Lyons is conducting a review of the scope for relocating Civil Service jobs/functions out of London and the South East.

DEFENCE

Bird Strikes

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on *(a)* the cost of bird scarers and *(b)* their efficacy in preventing RAF bird-strikes. [152459]

Mr. Ingram: In 2003 approximately £1.5 million was spent on bird control at RAF stations.

The use of bird scarers reduces the number of bird-strikes when aircraft are close to the airfield. However the majority of bird-strikes occur when the aircraft is in flight; Bird Control Units can do nothing to prevent these.

Catterick (Trainees' Boots)

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many pairs of correctly fitting boots each trainee receives at Infantry Training Centre, Catterick. [152377]

Mr. Ingram: New recruits to the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick are all issued with one pair of correctly fitting boots when they first commence training. These boots are exchangeable as necessary for reasons of fair wear and tear, accidental damage, etc. during the course of training. On completion of training, each successful recruit is issued with one further pair of boots.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much space, expressed in square metres, the Department occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150289]

Mr. Caplin: MOD headquarters activity is currently carried out in six buildings in central London. Both military and civilian personnel occupy office space. The net usable area of these buildings, not including circulation, columns and walls, to the nearest square metre, is laid out in the following table.

Building	*Net usable area (m^2)*
Metropole Building	15,528
Northumberland Avenue	10,285
Old War Office	25,396
St. Georges Court	20,835
Great Scotland Yard	[1]4,631
Total	97,165

[1] Includes circulation.

The Main Building redevelopment project completes in 2004. Following reoccupation the MOD will dispose of four of the buildings listed in the table. Headquarters activities will be concentrated in two Whitehall sites, with one further building in central London, as part of an overall reduction in staff in central London from over 12,500 in 1990 to less than 5,200 by the time the project completes. The net usable area for these buildings, to the nearest square metre, is as follows.

Building	*Net usable area (m^2)*
Redeveloped Main Building	49,634
Old War Office	25,396
St. Georges Court	20,835
Total	95,865

In addition the Department occupies parts of three other buildings in central London, including the Met Office London Weather Centre, totalling some 4,355 square metres.

A relatively small number of civil servants are based at operational and other military establishments throughout Greater London. Information on the proportion of these establishments used for office space is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of staff employed within his Department are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145770]

Mr. Caplin: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him on 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1130–34W, by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Cabinet Office.

Driver Training

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received on the resources available for driver training in the armed forces. [152303]

Mr. Ingram: No specific representations have been received regarding the resources available for driver training in the armed forces. However, in common with all other aspects of individual training, the resources available are under constant review.

European Armaments Agency

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the appointment of the Head of the European Armaments Agency. [150784]

Mr. Hoon: The European Union's General Affairs and External Relations Council decided on 17 November last that a new European Agency should be created in the fields of defence capabilities development, research, acquisition and armaments.

The Head of the Agency will be the EU High Representative for European Foreign and Security Affairs, Javier Solana.

It was announced on 29 January that a Ministry of Defence official, Mr. Nick Witney, currently Director General International Security Policy, has been appointed to lead the Agency Establishment Team.

The Government welcome these developments and look forward to the Agency contributing to the strengthening of defence capabilities of the European Security and Defence Policy and Europe's contribution to NATO.

Forces Bases (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces are based in Wales. [152246]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 12 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 324–25W, to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Llwyd).

Iraq

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what protection from radioactive fallout is offered to UK forces in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [148294]

Mr. Ingram: In accordance with NATO agreed definitions the Ministry of Defence defines fallout as the return to lower atmospheric layers and to earth of radioactive substances projected to high altitude, and contaminated particulate matter and debris absorbed into the cloud of a nuclear burst. Fallout will result from the detonation of a nuclear weapon. Radiological contamination can occur from the use of a radiation dispersion device. The likelihood of either occurring in Iraq is currently assessed as low.

MOD has safety instructions on the measures to protect personnel from radioactive fallout, radiological contamination and Environmental Industrial Hazards. The measures the military adopt follow UK best practice for nuclear protection.

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops are deployed in Iraq. [150149]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: As at 27 January 2004, there were around 10,000 United Kingdom personnel in Iraq.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of *(a)* tanks, *(b)* armoured personnel carriers and *(c)* other equipment used by troops from Welsh battalions stationed in Iraq were fully upgraded for use in desert conditions; and what the cost was of these upgrades. [151745]

Mr. Ingram: The only Welsh battalion to have deployed on Operation Telic to date is 1st Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Wales (RRW), which does not operate Main Battle Tanks. 1RRW operates Warrior and FV 430 armoured personnel carriers and these were considered fit for use in desert conditions and were not modified for this purpose prior to or during operations. The unit also operates Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) [CVR(T)]. These vehicles were also considered fit for use in desert conditions and were not modified for this purpose prior to or during Operation Telic.

Units will also utilise other Combat Support Vehicles in theatre. These include Battlefield Ambulances of which all those deployed on Operation Telic were modified for use in desert conditions under an Urgent Operational Requirement at a cost of £8,000 per vehicle.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1247W, about the Iraq Survey Group, if he will break down the figure *(a)* by nationalities and *(b)* by speciality; and what the figures were for January 2003. [151538]

Mr. Hoon: The figure of 1,272 personnel in the Iraq Survey Group is broken down as follows:

	Number
United States	1,210
United Kingdom	52
Australia	10

United Kingdom contribution consists of 31 Service personnel (Army 20, Royal Air Force 7, Royal Navy 4) serving as Headquarters staff, Signals staff, EOD staff, Collection Team Commanders and interviewers/ interpreters; and 21 civilians who are scientific and technical specialists. The breakdown by specialism of other coalition members' contributions is a matter for their Governments.

There are no comparable figures for January 2003 as the Iraq Survey Group was not established until June 2003.

Ministry of Defence Police

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the budget of the Ministry of Defence Police has been in each of the past five years in current prices; and what the planned budget is for the next three years. [152238]

Mr. Caplin: The Department now reports in Resource Accounting Terms. Budgetary figures from 2002–03 onwards are therefore not entirely comparable with those recorded for earlier years. Budgets from 2002–03 are broken down into Resource Defence Expenditure Limit (DEL), Capital DEL and Annual Managed Expenditure (AME). The Ministry of Defence Police budget figures, at then outturn prices, were as follows:

	£ million
1999–2000	134.237
2000–01	139.145
2001–02	132.732
2002–03	
Resource DEL	141.932
Capital DEL	1.160
AME	4.767
2003–04	
Resource DEL	151.716
Capital DEL	1.795
AME	7.183

Budgets for future years are set at the appropriate time.

Night Vision Goggles

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the overall allocation is of night-vision goggles to the *(a)* Royal Navy and Royal Marines, *(b)* Army and *(c)* Royal Air Force. [149878]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* NVGs used by aircrew are not allocated on a Service basis. NVGs are issued to Front Line Commands according to operational requirements and as such, the numbers vary on a day to day basis. As at 31 December 2003, 307 aircrew NVGs were held by CINFLEET, 882 by Joint Helicopter Command (which operates both Army and RAF helicopters) and 865 by RAF Strike Command. A further 287 aircrew NVGs were undergoing repair or maintenance at designated regional repair facilities. NVGs can be operated only in helicopters that have been specifically modified for this role and are fitted to allow operation with NVGs according to their tactical role in operations.

In addition to aircrew NVGs the following quantities of night vision weapon sights and goggles are held:

Royal Navy: 455, of which 178 are Weapon sights and 277 are head mounted goggles.

Royal Marines: 1,553, of which 855 are Weapon sights and 698 are head mounted goggles.

Army: 18,541, of which 13,000 are Weapon sights and 5,541 are head mounted goggles.

Royal Air Force: 1,630, of which 1,232 are Weapon sights and 398 are head mounted goggles.

Personal Radio Systems

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether individual soldiers are permitted to buy components for their army-issued personal radio systems. [152378]

Mr. Ingram: No. There are well-established procedures in place for units to address shortages of equipment through the Ministry of Defence supply system.

Project ISOLUS

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list sites owned by his Department that are being considered for storing radioactive waste as part of project ISOLUS. [152380]

Mr. Ingram: 117 Ministry of Defence owned coastal sites are being considered for suitability to store radioactive material from nuclear-powered submarines under Project ISOLUS. Many have been dismissed and I will make an announcement once it has been established which of the remaining sites, or others that may yet be identified, warrant further consideration.

I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 68WH, that further public consultation will be carried out on any new options that have merit.

RAF Flying Posts

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many RAF flying posts there are this year; and how many are planned for each of the next three years. [152222]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

RAF Halton

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the report of the Defence Aviation Safety Centre into the possible impact on public safety of the relocation of glider squadrons to RAF Halton. [147968]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Aviation Safety Centre conducted a risk management survey on both RAF Henlow and RAF Halton in late 2003. Copies of the section of the report relating to RAF Halton and specifically the measures to ensure that the Station operates safely have been placed in the Library of the House today. It is expected that the recommendations proposed for RAF Halton will be fully adopted to ensure that the Station continues to operate safely.

RAF Leeming (Security)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether there were breaches of security at RAF Leeming during the evening of 29 November and early morning of 30 November 2003; and whether an unauthorised person was able to approach within about 50 m of the vehicles of the Nuclear Weapons Convoy while parked at RAF Leeming; [147075]

(2) how his Department keeps under review the protection and security arrangements at RAF Leeming; if he will make available the outcome and recommendations of such reviews; and if he will make a statement; [147076]

(3) whether the convoy of road vehicles used in the transportation of nuclear warheads to and from RNAD Coulport and the Atomic Weapons Establishments in Berkshire stopped overnight at RAF Leeming on the night of 29 and 30 November 2003; and whether it was carrying nuclear warheads; [147077]

(4) whether for the transport and storage of fissile materials the United Kingdom adopts the security and protection standards prescribed by IAEA INFCIRC/225 Rev 4; [147078]

(5) whether, in addition to IAEA INFCIRC/225, his Department applies further safeguards during transit and storage of nuclear warheads that are equivalent to the United States Department of Energy's stored weapons standard; [147079]

(6) if he will make a statement on security at RAF stations. [151684]

Mr. Ingram: I can confirm that an unauthorised person gained entry to RAF Leeming while a convoy of military vehicles stopped overnight on 29 November 2003 at the base. The person was subsequently escorted off the premises by the Ministry of Defence Police. In accordance with Government policy, I can neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at any particular place or time. Security at MOD establishments, including RAF Leeming, is kept under constant review. It would not be appropriate to disclose details of security reviews or their recommendations and I am therefore withholding the information requested under Exemption 1a of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

However, stringent security and protection standards are applied by the MOD whenever United Kingdom Defence Nuclear Materials are used, stored and transported. These security standards are compatible with IAEA INFCIR/225, and the MOD applies further safeguards during transit and storage of nuclear warheads, which are equivalent to the standards applied by the United States Department of Energy to their nuclear warheads.

RAF Stations

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many RAF stations there were in the UK in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 1993; and how many accommodated flying operations in each year. [151629]

Mr. Ingram: In 1993, there were 83 RAF stations in the UK; in 2003, there were 47. In 1993, 36 stations had active runways or helicopter landing pads; in 2003, 28.

Reservists

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* exercises and *(b)* training course places involving reservists have been (i) cancelled and (ii) withdrawn in each of the three armed services in the last two years. [149305]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The information requested is not centrally held and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Royal Gibraltar Regiment

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for changes in *(a)* manning levels and *(b)* overall structure of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment; and if he will make a statement. [151188]

Mr. Ingram: The staff of Headquarter British Forces Gibraltar are currently reviewing the military and ceremonial tasks of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment to identify the appropriate levels of readiness; to re-validate structures and manpower levels of the Regiment; and to develop the training requirements.

Royal Navy

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on lean manned ships for the Royal Navy; and if he will make a statement. [152244]

Mr. Ingram: In the Naval Service, the Type 23 frigates are commonly known as Lean Manned ships. The increased use of automation enabled a smaller ship's complement, with an emphasis on skilled maintainers and operators. A consequent reduction in the proportion of junior personnel available for manual tasks has been alleviated by providing additional civilian manpower to undertake cleaning, painting and dining hall support when the ships are in harbour.

Sea Harrier

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Sea Harrier will be withdrawn from service. [152604]

Mr. Ingram: The first of three Sea Harrier Squadrons will be withdrawn from service on 31 March 2004. It is planned to retire the second Squadron in March 2005 and the final Squadron in March 2006.

Survey Vessels

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total value was of the contract awarded to Vosper Thorneycroft to design and construct HMS Echo and HMS Enterprise. [149617]

Mr. Ingram: The contract for design, construction and 25 years' support for HMS Echo and HMS Enterprise was awarded in July 2000 at a value of £130 million. The breakdown of this figure into individual elements is commercially sensitive and I am withholding it in accordance with Exemption 7 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, which relates to effective management and operations of the public service.

Training Exercises

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which countries have cancelled training exercises involving HM forces in the past two years; and for what reasons. [152220]

Mr. Ingram: Of the 350 exercises listed annually in the United Kingdom Defence Exercise Programme, 69 were cancelled in 2002, and 151 in 2003. Of those exercises cancelled in the last year, some 10 per cent. were cancelled by nations other than the UK hosting exercises in their own country or sponsoring exercises elsewhere. While specific reasons for cancellation are not available in many cases, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost, many nations' exercise programmes (like the UK's) have been affected in recent years by competing operational priorities.

Type 45 Destroyer

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date the first Type 45 destroyer will be delivered to the Royal Navy; and whether this is the date originally specified. [150869]

Mr. Ingram: The currently approved in service date for the First of Class, HMS Daring, is November 2007. This date has not changed since the Type 45 was approved at Main Gate in July 2000, although it is currently under review.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

British Universities Overseas

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what independent audit is carried out of the quality of education offered by British universities operating overseas. [152205]

Alan Johnson: The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) carries out audits which cover the means by which an awarding institution secures the standards of its awards and the effectiveness of its quality management arrangements for partnership links, including those overseas. In addition, as part of the 'Institutional Audit'

process for HEIs in England, the QAA also examines the management of any collaborative links an institution may have.

Children's Fund

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills by how much he expected the Children's Fund partnerships to underspend their 2003–04 budget profiles; on what basis the expectation of an underspend on Children's Fund partnerships was reached; and what alternative uses have been made of funds clawed back from his expectations of an underspend by Children's Fund partnerships. [151428]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The 2003–04 mid year review of expenditure in the Children's Fund programme was carried out to assess actual expenditure against partnerships' own projections. This identified approximately £12.5 million underspend from the first half of the year. Underspend from partnerships is being used to fund other commitments in the Children's Fund programme.

School Transport

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Essex received free school transport to *(a)* secondary schools, *(b)* primary and infant schools and *(c)* special schools in each year from 1990 to 2003. [150907]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Although we collect data on home to school transport expenditure, we do not usually collect data on the number of children receiving free transport. However, in response to a recent survey, Essex said that it provides free home to school transport to about 21,000 pupils at a cost of around £20 million in 2000/01.

Higher Education Funding

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 27 January in respect of the commitment to more funding for higher education. [152531]

Alan Johnson: In line with Exemption 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, confidential communications between departments are not made public.

Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money deriving from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme has been spent on promoting environmental education in schools in each of the last three years; and what assessment he has made of the impact of changes to the scheme on the funding of environmental education from this source. [151431]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

The amount of Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (LTCS) funds spent on environmental education within schools under categories c and cc can be summarised as follows.

Calendar year	*Expenditure (£)*
2001	725,780
2002	234,700
2003	71,300

Note:
The figure for 2003 is as reported to date and may increase given that Environmental Bodies may report on expenditure for this specific year until April 2004.

The reform of the LTCS was announced in the pre-Budget report in 2002. As a result, waste projects, previously funded under categories c and cc, are no longer eligible for funding. However, certain types of environmental educational projects are eligible for funding under the current scheme, for example in the biodiversity category.

A sustainable waste management delivery public spending programme, administered by Defra, has been established following the reform of the LTCS, to ensure that sustainable alternatives to landfill disposal are widely available. Under the public expenditure programme the Waste and Resources Action Programme are responsible for taking forward work on waste awareness.

School Buses

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received about safety on school buses; and if he will make a statement. [151863]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The Department for Education and Skills has received representations from the National Association of Head Teachers on behalf of their members following their conference resolution on safety on school buses. We have received similar representations from one individual. I met with the NAHT to discuss safety on school buses on 19 January.

Bus safety legislation falls within the remit of Department for Transport. Local Authorities are required to secure "Best Value" when negotiating home to school transport contracts, and can include a requirement that additional safety measures be included in tenders. When asked to do so we advise authorities to take the safety benefits of seat-belts and other measures into account when considering the suitability of transport for particular journeys.

University of Humberside

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he was informed that the fraud squad of the Israeli police were investigating the unlawful sale of University of Humberside degrees; and what measures he has taken as a result. [152195]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* My Department was alerted by recent press articles to the investigation by Israeli police. The Higher Education Funding Council for England wrote to the University of Lincoln (formerly the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside) on 26 January 2004 formally requesting details of the University's position.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* false and *(b)* genuine degree certificates have been issued through each branch of University of Humberside franchised operations in Israel since they were established. [152196]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* The University has informed me that 4,965 students in Israel were awarded degrees and that these are genuine. I have no information on the number of false degree certificates.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Albatrosses

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 90W, on albatrosses and petrels, if the United Kingdom will ratify the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels before the first meeting of the parties on 2004. [147162]

Mr. Morley: We are keen to ratify this Agreement as soon as possible and very much hope that we will be able to do so before the first meeting of the parties.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 90W, on albatrosses and petrels, what legal and other assistance the Government are giving to the UK overseas territories of *(a)* South Georgia/South Sandwich Islands, *(b)* Falkland Islands and *(c)* Tristan/Gough to enable them to submit their ratifications of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels on time for the first meeting of the parties in 2004. [147179]

Mr. Morley: The UK continues to provide assistance to, and work closely with, all the Overseas Territories referred to by the hon. Member. We are keen to ratify the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels as soon as possible and we are giving priority to those Overseas Territories that have the necessary legislation in place or have formally requested that ratification be extended to them.

Biodegradable Waste

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of municipal waste going to landfill was biodegradable waste in the last year for which figures are available; and what estimate she has made of the likely change in the next five years. [151640]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* In 2001–02, 28.8 million tonnes of municipal waste were collected, of which 22.3 million tonnes (77 per cent.) were disposed of to landfill. 70 per cent. of the waste land filled was estimated to be biodegradable using various assumptions. Surveys of biodegradable content of municipal waste are not made routinely, but the Environment Agency plan to carry out a survey to determine the biodegradable proportion of municipal waste arising.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total amount paid under the Common Agricultural Policy was in the United Kingdom to *(a)* limited companies and *(b)* to individuals in the most recent year for which figures are available. [144457]

Alun Michael: The figures represent the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund year 2003—16 October 2002 to 15 October 2003.

The figures include CAP market support and structural funds for the above reporting year.

These figures represent payments to English farmers. Information for other countries within the UK is a matter for their respective devolved assemblies.

	£
Limited Companies	574,273,502.02
Individuals	1,464,032,029.02

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will recommend to the Leader of the House that a debate should be held on Common Agricultural Policy reform prior to decisions being made on the methodology to be employed in implementing the single farm payment. [R] [151159]

Margaret Beckett *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* I am aware that a number of Members would welcome such a debate. However, I am always conscious that there are very heavy pressures on parliamentary time. The timing of such a debate is a matter for the Business Managers.

Deposit Systems

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent studies her Department has undertaken in respect of deposit systems used in other European countries; and if she will make a statement. [152697]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* No studies have recently been undertaken. However, a study of deposits systems is currently under way, which will take into account international practices. We expect the first part of this study to report at the end of March.

Environmental Protection

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial and practical assistance her Department has given environmental health officers since the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Regime came into force; and if she will make a statement. [150626]

Mr. Morley: The Department has provided local authorities with a range of resources to help them carry out their functions under the Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) Regulations 2000.

Financial

Local authorities recover costs from fees and charges at levels set by the Department. These levels are revised in consultation with all stakeholders annually. As 2003 was the first year of the new PPC regime no figures are available for total costs recovered by local authorities for their PPC function, but total local authorities income for all industrial air pollution functions in 2002–03 was 8.3 million.

Guidance

In March 2003 the Department published a guidance manual, specifically for local authorities, which sets out the policy and procedures necessary to determine an application for a PPC permit. Additional guidance notes have been developed on particular issues as a response to requests for further information by local authorities. The Department has issued technical guidance tailored to individual sectors covered by PPC and regulated by local authorities. Six such notes have been issued to date with a further two to follow. These sector guidance notes provide local authorities with a basis upon which to determine what would constitute the "Best Available Techniques" (BAT) for an installation in that sector. Production of further advice and guidance will be guided by the results of research commissioned recently by the Department into local authority functions with respect to industrial pollution control.

Support

Four regional training workshops were held in early 2003 before the start of the local authority IPPC regime, these events catered for over 300 local authorities across England and Wales. Local authorities are encouraged to call upon on-going support from officials within the Department, for advice on policy matters, and the Environment Agency's Local Authority Unit on technical matters. The Department has promoted a network of local authorities, each experienced regulators of a particular industrial sector, to act as "centres of expertise" in order to provide additional advice to local authorities.

European Definitions (Fruit and Vegetables)

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the scale of penalties which will be incurred by retailers for selling *(a)* peaches which are less than 5.6 cm in diameter, *(b)* bananas which are less than 13.97 cm long and *(c)* carrots which are less than 1.9 cm at the thick end, following the Law Lords' decision on the case against Asda initiated by her Department. [146720]

Alun Michael: In November 2000 an inspector from the Horticultural Marketing Inspectorate found that some of the fruit and vegetables on display in the Asda store at Fareham in Hampshire contravened EC marketing standards. Asda's representatives argued that the court had no jurisdiction to deal with the alleged offences and the case eventually reached the House of Lords who on 18 December 2003 found in Defra's favour and returned the case to the magistrates court for trial. The full extent of the House of Lords decision can be found on the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk .

This decision confirms the view that the European Community's Marketing Standards for fresh fruit and vegetables and for bananas assist trade and protect consumers from the sale of substandard products can be upheld by prosecuting offenders in the magistrates court. It should be noted that contraventions in the Asda case involved inadequate labelling in relation to fruits such as lemons, apples, oranges and plums as well as the standard of Iceberg lettuces and aubergines. Unlike standards for other fresh fruits and vegetables, which do apply at retail level, the standard for bananas applies only to unripened green bananas. These are inspected only at the port of entry into the UK.

While the figures given in the question are based on some misapprehension, produce of less than the minimum sizes prescribed in the standards is generally regarded as of unmarketable quality. The penalty for selling produce in breach of the EU Marketing Standards is a fine not exceeding Level 5 on the standard scale (currently £5,000) or imprisonment for up to three months, or both. These are unaffected by the decision of the Law Lords. However, prosecution is a last resort. When inspections show that produce does not comply with the standards, inspectors seek first to secure action to bring it into compliance. Prosecution is considered only where traders have failed to respond to repeated warnings.

Flooding Insurance

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to offer a Government home insurance scheme to owners of homes built on flood plains who cannot obtain commercial insurance cover; and if she will make a statement. [152336]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* The Government have no plans to introduce such a scheme.

According to the Association of British Insurers (ABI), it is the intention of the insurance industry, that flood insurance should continue to be available to the vast majority of existing properties. As set out in the ABI's Statement of Principles[1], of the 1.9 million properties on the floodplain, flood insurance will continue to be available for all those properties defended to a minimum standard of 1 in 75, or for those properties where such defences are planned by 2007.

For other properties (currently estimated at 200,000), insurers cannot guarantee to maintain cover, but will examine the risks on a case-by-case basis, and will use their best efforts to continue to provide cover. ABI believes that nearly all homes are insurable to a degree, provided appropriate local action is taken to protect the property, e.g., use of flood resilient design, accredited protection products, and temporary defences. However, the insurance industry has signalled that inappropriate new developments in the floodplain are unlikely to be able to secure insurance cover.

[1] www.abi.org.uk/Display/File/78/Statement_of_Principles.doc

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the change in greenhouse gas emissions has been in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Spain and *(c)* Portugal since 1990. [151489]

Mr. Morley: Under the provisions of the Monitoring Mechanism Decision (Council Decision 93/389/EEC as amended by Decision 99/296/EC), member states are required to report annually to the European Commission on their anthropogenic emissions of the six greenhouse gases covered by the Kyoto Protocol. The fourth progress report, published by the Commission in November 2003, shows data for member states' greenhouse gas emissions in 2001.

The base year uses 1990 data for emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. For the fluorinated gases, most member states have chosen 1995 as the base year, as allowed under the Protocol.

Under the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol, the EU and its member states have agreed to meet their commitments jointly under a burden-sharing arrangement. The EU target, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 8 per cent. below base year levels, has been redistributed between member states to reflect their national circumstances, requirements for economic growth, and the scope for further emission reductions. Under the burden sharing agreement Spain and Portugal have agreed to targets that allow for an increase in their greenhouse gas emissions. Spain has a target to increase its emissions of greenhouse gases by 15 per cent. above base year levels by 2008–12, while Portugal has a target to increase emissions of greenhouse gases by 27 per cent. above base year levels by 2008–12.

The UK's target is to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 12.5 per cent. below base year levels by 2008–12. In 2001, UK emissions were 12.3 per cent. below base year levels; Spanish emissisons were 32.1 per cent. above base year levels and; Portuguese emissions were 36.4 per cent. above the base year levels. Provisional figures for 2002, for the UK only, indicates emissions were about 15 per cent. below the base year.

Gulf Stream

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has assessed on the impact of global warming on the Gulf Stream; and if she will make a statement. [152251]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* The responses of the Gulf Stream and other component: of the North Atlantic Thermohaline Circulation are being investigated in a major joint research programme by CEFAS and by the RAPID programme of the Natural Environment Research Council, working with Dutch, Norwegian and US Research Councils. This issue is also being investigated by the Hadley Centre, funded by Department, in collaboration with the RAPID programme.

Under future climate change scenarios due to increased levels of greenhouse gases the Gulf Stream is predicted to weaken. Climate models do not, however, predict that the Gulf Stream will shut down. Consequently the UK and Western Europe are still predicted to warm by several degrees over the next century.

Hazardous Waste

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which landfill sites have been chosen to continue receiving hazardous waste following the implementation of the Hazardous Waste Directive. [151194]

Mr. Morley: I have placed in the Library of the House the information requested, as at the end of 2003. The choice of whether any sites under the ownership or control are classified as hazardous is a matter for the landfill operator. From July 2004, the Landfill Directive permits stable non-reactive hazardous waste to be disposed of in a separate cell in non-hazardous landfills. This is expected to result in additional capacity being available for the disposal of hazardous waste.

Horse Passports

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will assess the impact of the European Directive requiring horse passports on the population of semi-feral mountain ponies in Wales. [149656]

Mr. Touhig: I have been asked to reply.

I understand that no final decision has yet been taken about the point at which Welsh mountain ponies will have to be passported, but implementation of the European legislation in full will require every horse, pony and donkey to have a passport. The Welsh Assembly, which is responsible, is still considering the final domestic legislation to implement the Directive, taking into account the need to preserve both the breed of pony and the environment in which it lives.

Information Technology

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list each Information Technology system *(a)* supported and *(b)* in development by the IT Department at Guildford; which of those systems provide information to agencies associated with her Department; which of those systems support payments to outside bodies and individuals, giving the value of the payments for each system and the number of recipients of payments; which of those systems provide statistical information and payments to (i) her own and (ii) other Government departments; and which of those systems provide statistical information to the European Union. [150615]

Alun Michael: A table showing the list of each IT system supported by or under development by the IT Directorate at Guildford has been placed in the Library of the House. The table also sets out the additional information requested.

Organic Farming

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Government have made of the contribution of organic farming to curbing the build up of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere. [152323]

Mr. Morley: Carbon monoxide is of concern mainly because of its effects on human health and its role in tropospheric ozone formation. As a result, carbon monoxide is one of the pollutants covered by the

Government's Air Quality Strategy. No exceedences of the health-based ambient air quality objective have been recorded in the UK for several years.

According to the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, over 90 per cent. of the annual UK emissions for 2001 resulted from incomplete fuel combustion, largely from road transport. The contribution of agriculture to the total is small, so organic farming is not expected to have a measurable effect on the total.

Packaging Waste

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to publish the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2003; and why they are only available in draft form. [147080]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W, on packaging waste, what her policy is on the penalising of companies involved in the packaging waste process for actions taken in contravention of the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) (England) 2003 before they were published. [152138]

Mr. Morley: The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2003 came into force on 1 January and were published in final form on 14 January.

The Environment Agency is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Regulations.

Producers are required to register with the Environment Agency by 7 April, providing the required packaging data and fee. There are no actions required under these new Regulations that have to be discharged in the first 14 days of January.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W, on packaging waste, what the extent was of the delays caused by the Christmas holiday period to the publishing of the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) (England) 2003. [152139]

Mr. Morley: The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2003 came into force on 1 January 2004. The final Regulations were published by the Stationery Office on 14 January.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason her Department had not allowed for delays caused by the Christmas holiday period when deciding *(a)* when to publish the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) (England) 2003 and *(b)* when they should come into force. [152140]

Mr. Morley: The new obligation year under the Packaging Regulations starts on 1 January each year. This determines when new Regulations must come into force. The Department's intention is to publish new Regulations as soon as possible after making them. We would have preferred to see the new Regulations published before 1 January 2004, but from time to time, unintended delays occur which was the case on this occasion.

Pollution

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the action plan on diffuse pollution relating to agriculture to be concluded. [152078]

Mr. Morley: The action plan to reduce diffuse water pollution from agriculture in England is currently being developed to ensure agriculture plays, and continues to play, its part to make water in England as clean and healthy as practicable.

As announced in the pre-Budget report in December 2003, we intend to publish a draft action plan for consultation early this year that will set out options to tackle diffuse water pollution, including a consideration of the pros and cons of using economic instruments.

Sellafield

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress made in ending discharges of TC-99 from Sellafield. [152191]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* As a result of co-operative efforts between BNFL, the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive and others, much has already been done to reduce Technetium-99 (Tc-99) discharge levels from Sellafield.

The discharge limit was cut from 200 TBq/year (terabecquerels per year) to 90 TBq/year in 2000. Ministers also asked the Environment Agency to carry out a review of Tc-99 discharges and the Agency's proposed decision was published in September 2001. One of the proposals, to deal with new arisings of Medium Active Concentrate (MAC) (the complex liquid mixture that contains Tc-99 and other, more radiotoxic, radionuclides) using "MAC-Diversion" abatement technology, was implemented in 2003. This will allow the discharge limit to be reduced to 10 TBq/year in 2006.

The Environment Agency also proposed further research on abatement of Tc-99 arising from stored MAC. In October 2003, following approval by regulators, a plant-scale trial began using tetraphenylphosphonium bromide (TPP)—a chemical that precipitates Tc-99 out of MAC. Initial results appear to be encouraging. However, a full evaluation of the trial by the regulators is still under way. If their assessment shows that TPP is acceptable for future use to reduce Tc-99 discharges, it will allow the discharge limits to be cut to below 90 TBq/year before 2006.

Warm Front Programme

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what funding her Department has provided for the Warm Front programme in each year of that programme, including the current financial year; [151887]

(2) when she expects to be able to announce the level of funding for the Warm Front programme in the *(a)* next financial year and *(b)* future years of the scheme. [151888]

Mr. Morley: The level of expenditure under Warm Front since the start of the scheme is as follows: 2000–01—£72 million; 2001–02—£197 million; 2002–03—£163 million. For the current financial year, 2003–04, £152 million has been allocated to Warm Front.

Decisions on future funding of the scheme will be considered during the normal Government spending round process and announcements will be made after final decisions have been taken.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households she estimates are eligible for the Warm Front scheme in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley; and how many households qualify for the Warm Homes Plus element of the programme. [151206]

Mr. Morley: We are preparing estimates of the total number of households in England currently eligible for assistance under Warm Front as part of the next spending round process.

In addition we will be producing an Implementation Plan on the action required to achieve targets and tackle fuel poverty.

Information on eligibility of the Warm Front scheme cannot be provided at a local authority level. The smallest area for which the Department for Work and Pensions can provide estimates of those eligible for the scheme is regional government office.

Waste Disposal

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her Answer of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 732W, on domestic waste, in which month the Government will consider the results of that work. [150841]

Mr. Morley: The Government will consider the results of work being undertaken as it is progressed during 2004, so no specific month has been identified for this work.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of *(a)* domestic, *(b)* commercial and *(c)* industrial refuse was recycled in each of the last three years. [151205]

Mr. Morley: Data from the three most recent annual Municipal Waste Management Surveys shows that the recycling and composting rates for household waste in England have been:

	Percentage
1999–2000	10.3
2000–01	11.2
2001–02	12.4

Preliminary indications from the Best Value Performance Indicator returns for 2002–03 suggest a composting and recycling rate for England of 14.9 per cent., however this figure has still to be audited.

The most recent figures for commercial waste and industrial waste in England are found in the Strategic Waste Management Assessment 2000, published by the Environment Agency, covering 1998–99. The survey collected data from a sample of 20,000 businesses across England and Wales.

Commercial waste—22.5 per cent.

Industrial waste—34 per cent.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what subsidies are available for *(a)* the incineration of waste, *(b)* the recycling of waste and *(c)* other waste disposal options; at what rate per tonne those subsidies are paid; and what assessment she has made of the impact of each of the subsidies available on waste disposal options in England. [151366]

Mr. Morley: There are no direct subsidies available for waste disposal in the UK. However, in England the Government provide financial assistance to promote sustainable waste management in a number of ways.

Examples include the Waste Implementation Programme and its components. This sustainable waste delivery programme aims to deliver a package of strategic measures recommended by the Strategy Unit report on waste, helping to move waste management up the waste hierarchy. The Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund provides assistance to local authorities to improve their infrastructure and collection systems for waste, in particular promoting recycling. Additional funding is provided through Waste PFI, for local authorities looking to work in partnership with the private sector to fund long-term waste solutions. £355 million has been provided over the SR2002 period.

There is also a Government funded Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) which is designed to create stable and efficient markets for recycled materials and products, and remove the barriers to waste minimisation, re-use and recycling.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the environmental benefits of recycling. [151367]

Mr. Morley: Recycling has three direct benefits for the environment. By drawing recycled materials back into the production process fewer raw materials have to be extracted to produce the same amount of new products. This helps conserve natural resources and reduces the damage to the environment from resource extraction, for example mining or quarrying.

It generally takes less energy to re-process recycled materials than generate new products from raw materials.

Recycling also reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill, which is environmentally harmful.

Recycling, which requires greater awareness of and direct involvement in waste issues by the public, will have the indirect benefit of encouraging greater public involvement and responsibility for their environment.

The Government have commissioned a comparative study of the health and environmental effects of different types of waste treatment, which is to be published shortly.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the environmental benefits of incineration. [151368]

Mr. Morley: Incineration with controls on emissions is an important part of the Government's strategy on waste management. It is the only suitable way to protect the environment from certain biological pathogens and is the most effective way to render some hazardous chemical wastes safe.

While re-using, recycling or composting waste can represent a better use of resources, incineration offers an opportunity to extract energy from the waste and is therefore preferable to disposal. This, in turn can reduce extraction and transportation of fuels that would otherwise be used to create energy. By diverting biodegradable waste from landfill, incineration also helps to reduce the production of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.

Government have commissioned a comparative study of the health and environmental effects of different types of waste treatment, which is to be published shortly.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the environmental costs and benefits of landfill. [151369]

Mr. Morley: All waste disposal options have environmental impacts. Landfill has potentially adverse effects on air and water quality in addition to the local environmental impacts of noise and smell. The most important environmental impact reported in scientific research is the effect on global warming of emissions of greenhouse gases from the landfill of biodegradable waste. Methane (a greenhouse gas 20 times more powerful than carbon dioxide) is generated at all landfill sites accepting biodegradable waste. The contribution of methane emitted from landfills to global warming contributes some 25 per cent. of methane emissions in the UK.

Well operated and regulated landfills nevertheless have a role to play in waste disposal both now and in the future. The EU Landfill Directive (as implemented in England and Wales by the Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002)) sets new standards for the management and engineering of landfill sites to reduce as far as possible the negative environmental impacts and any potential health risk. The Government are committed to reducing the UK's reliance on landfill, which, as well as its negative environmental impacts, makes little practical use of waste and is a missed opportunity to recover value from waste. For these reasons, Waste Strategy 2000 sets out a range of policies to promote the reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste in order to divert it from landfill.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of waste have been disposed of in England by *(a)* landfill, *(b)* incineration and *(c)* recycling in each of the last five years. [151370]

Mr. Morley: According to the most recent Municipal Waste Management Survey, about 28.8 million tonnes of municipal waste were collected in 2001–02. Of this, about 22.3 million tonnes were disposed of to landfill, 2.5 million tonnes were incinerated, and 3.9 million tonnes were recycled. The remaining municipal waste was dealt with using other management methods.

The latest figures on industrial and commercial waste come from the last Environment Agency survey on commercial and industrial waste conducted in 1998–99, and a survey on construction and demolition waste in England in the same year. It is estimated that in 1998–99 51.2 million tonnes of industrial and commercial waste (including construction and demolition waste) were landfilled, 49.2 million tonnes were recycled and 1.3 million tonnes were incinerated. The Environment Agency is conducting another survey on commercial and industrial waste this year.

Water Companies

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of a £5 billion reduction in water company investment in environmental improvements on the United Kingdom's ability to meet its legal obligations to nature conservation sites; and if she will make a statement; [152250]

(2) what representations she has received from the Environment Agency regarding the consequences of reducing investment by the water industry in environmental improvement; and if she will make a statement. [151770]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 2 February 2004]*: The Government are committed to the maintenance or restoration of internationally and nationally important nature conservation sites, including Natura 2000, Ramsar and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. An assessment of water company programmes' effects on these areas, already under way, will be kept under review.

The Government published guidance on the contribution expected from water company investment to meeting the United Kingdom's legal obligations in the Secretary of State's Initial Guidance on the Periodic Review in January 2003. The Secretary of State's Principal Guidance on the Periodic Review, which will be published shortly.

The Secretary of State received formal written advice on the environment programme for the Periodic Review 2004 from the Environment Agency in November 2003. Both the Secretary of State and I have also had meetings and correspondence with the Environment Agency and English Nature to discuss the proposed environment programme.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. A. Faqi. [152642]

Mr. Mullin: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 838W.

Iran

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards democracy in Iran. [151604]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: For elections in any country to be regarded as free and fair, electors should have a chance to vote for candidates with a range of views. We are concerned at reports that many candidates have been disqualified from standing in February's parliamentary elections.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether former members of the Iraqi Ba'ath party will be permitted to stand for election in Iraq under the proposed arrangements being negotiated with the Iraq Governing Council. [151973]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The process of de-Ba'athification is an Iraqi led process. Guidelines were announced by the Iraqi Governing Council on 11 January and provide a clear framework for this process. The Transitional Administrative Law, which will include the criteria for nomination to the Transitional National Assembly, is in the final stages of drafting. It is likely to follow the existing practice that nominees shall not have been a member of the dissolved Ba'ath Party at the rank of Division Member (*uthu firqah*) or higher—unless exempted by the National De Ba'athification Commission—or a member of the past agencies of repression, or one who participated in the oppression of citizens.

South Africa

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which official from Trade Partners UK was given a sabbatical to work with BAE Systems in South Africa; what date and for what period this sabbatical was given; and what position the official held prior to his sabbatical. [151388]

Ms Hewitt: I have been asked to reply.

Nicholas McInnes is a DTI Civil Servant who was granted Special Leave Without Pay at his request with effect from 30 April 2003 for one year. He is now working in South Africa. Previously he was Director, International Management Directorate in UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) formerly Trade Partners UK.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the progress of the peace process in Sri Lanka. [152405]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Southwark, North and Bermondsey (Simon Hughes) on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 62W.

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the *(a)* President and *(b)* Prime Minister of Sri Lanka about the political situation in Sri Lanka. [152406]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary met the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe in June 2003. However, the British High Commissioner in Colombo also has regular discussions with both the President and Prime Minister. He last met the President on 3 December 2003 and the Prime Minister on 12 January this year.

SCOTLAND

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland for answer on 22 January, on the Scottish whisky industry. [152947]

Mrs. McGuire: I replied to the hon. Member's question on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 757W.

TRANSPORT

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who the members of the *(a)* Civil Aviation Authority, *(b)* Traffic Area Eastern and *(c)* Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151806]

Mr. McNulty: The names, dates of appointment and annual remuneration of members of the Civil Aviation Authority, Traffic Area Eastern England and Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee are recorded in the following table.

First name	*Surname*	*Appointed from*	*Appointed to*	*Remuneration*
Civil Aviation Authority				
John	Arscott	03/01/04	02/28/09	Yes
Mike	Bell	11/14/03	11/13/08	Yes
Harry	Bush	01/04/03	03/31/08	Yes
Chris	Jesnick	03/01/01	29/02/04	Yes
James	Keohane	01/01/04	12/31/08	Yes
David	Lusher	05/01/02	03/31/05	Yes
Roy	McNulty	09/01/04	08/31/08	Yes
Roger	Mountford	04/01/03	03/31/08	Yes
Helen	Simpson	08/01/01	07/31/04	Yes
Roy	Swainson	07/01/02	03/31/06	Yes
David	Walker	10/03/03	Resignation from ACAS	No

First name	Surname	Appointed from	Appointed to	Remuneration
Traffic Commissioner—East England				
Geoffrey	Simms	01/06/98	07/08/06	Yes
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee				
Pravinkant	Amin	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Sian	Baldwin	01/01/02	31/12/04	No
Ann	Bates	01/01/02	31/12/04	No
Neil	Betteridge	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Josephine	Clairmont	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Lekh	Dindayal	01/01/02	31/12/04	No
Jean	Dunlop	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
David	Finnegan	01/01/02	31/12/04	No
Julie	Giles	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Alan	Hartley	01/01/02	31/12/04	No
Roy	Hayter	11/10/02	31/12/04	No
Roger	Hewitt	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Grahame	Lawson	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Jenny	Meadows	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Thomas	Pey	01/01/02	31/12/04	No
David	Pugh	01/01/02	31/12/04	No
Keith	Richards	01/01/02	31/12/04	No
Laura	Smales	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Carol	Thomas	01/07/03	30/06/06	No
Richard	West	01/07/03	30/06/06	No

Railways

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the total level of investment provided by the private sector in the railway industry was in each of the financial years since the publication of the 10 Year Plan; [152444]

(2) if he will list the railway investment projects supported by the private sector in the last financial year; what the total level of funding provided by the private sector for these projects was *(a)* in the last financial year and *(b)* in total since the projects began; and what the private sector proportion of total funding for these projects was. [152445]

Mr. McNulty: The table shows total private rail investment in each of the three years 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03:

	£ million
2000–01	2,958
2001–02	3,386
2002–03	3,156

Rail investment projects supported by the private sector in 2002–03 include the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), West Coast Route Modernisation (WCRM), the train protection scheme, stations and depots, Waterloo-Fawkham Junction and the East Coast Main Line.

The total level of private funding raised by London and Continental Railways (LCR) in 2002–03, mainly for CTRL, was £2.1 billion. The total amount spent by Network Rail (NR) in 2002–03 on the other projects listed was, respectively, £761 million, £140 million, £44 million, £26 million and £11 million.

Comparable figures for the private and public sector contributions to the CTRL project are not readily available. The total level of private funding raised by LCR since the CTRL project began, mainly for that project, is £6.3 billion, not all of which has yet been drawn. The project also benefits from Public Sector Support (including capital and operating grants and loans, less amounts recovered by Government in respect of land rentals and proceeds from property developments) estimated in 2002 to total, over the life of the project, £1.8 billion in present value terms (discounted at 6 per cent. real to January 1997).

Total spending to date on the WCRM project, by NR and its predecessor Railtrack, is of the order of £3 billion. Total NR spending on the other projects listed above, since they began, is not readily available. It is not possible accurately to estimate the proportion of total funding for these projects which is provided by the private sector, because some private rail investment is indirectly funded by the public sector through franchise payments and access charges.

Rural Bus Grant

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce the levels of the rural bus grant to local authorities for 2004–05; and if he will enhance those grants to support authorities in securing the continuation of community transport schemes whose central Government funding has expired. [152860]

Mr. McNulty: The total amount allocated to local transport authorities in Rural Bus Subsidy Grant is due to rise from £48.5 million in the current financial year to £51 million in 2004–05. An announcement will be made shortly on the increases for individual authorities which will depend in part on consideration of newly available population data from the 2001 census. Following that announcement it will be for each authority to decide on what schemes and services the grant should be spent.

Swanwick Air Traffic Control Centre

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the cost is of the software upgrade at Swanwick Air Traffic Control Centre to be made by National Air Traffic Services as a result of the near-miss between a Virgin Atlantic and a Delta Airlines aircraft in November 2002; [151781]

(2) what the value is of software that will become redundant at Swanwick Air Traffic Control Centre owing to the software upgrade to be carried out as a result of the near-miss between a Virgin Atlantic and a Delta Airlines aircraft in November 2002; [151782]

(3) if he will list the spending on computer systems at the Swanwick Air Traffic Control Centre for each year since 1997. [151833]

Mr. McNulty: Spending on its computer systems is a matter for NATS. The incident in November 2002 has been assessed by the UK Airprox Board—an independent body of experts—as carrying no risk of collision. It was the result of human error and the software has been modified by NATS to preclude a repeat of such human error.

Taxis

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received

concerning the Office of Fair Trading's report recommending de-restriction of taxis; and if he will make a statement. [152478]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* We have received just over 600 representations about the OFT's report into licensed taxi and private hire vehicle services. We are now considering them carefully so that we can respond to the OFT within 120 days of their report. The representations include the views of key taxi and private hire stakeholders that we sought.

US Ships (Decommissioning)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the International Maritime Organisation recommendations on changing ballast water mid-ocean were followed in respect of the ships sent from the US for dismantling in Hartlepool. [152701]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* The vessels were appropriately ballasted for a towed transoceanic passage to the UK. No changes to the ballast water were made on route or after arrival at Hartlepool. If a decision was to be taken to discharge ballast water in Hartlepool then Able UK would need to submit a ballast water management plan for approval by the Environment Agency.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Motor Sport

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on progress with the Department's commitment to investment in British motor sport. [152566]

Mr. Caborn: The Department, along with the Department of Trade and Industry, recently announced a £16 million investment into motorsport, to take forward the recommendations in the Motorsport Competitiveness Panels report. This is the responsibility of the Motorsport Development Board, and my Officials continue to work with the Government Motorsport Unit to take forward the sporting recommendations in the report.

The East Midlands Development Agency also continues to work with Formula One Management, Octagon and the British Racing Drivers' Club about the long-term future of Silverstone.

Tourism

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with One North-East about its responsibilities in relation to tourism. [152488]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have discussed tourism with the Chairs of all the Regional Development Agencies, in the light of their taking over tourism responsibilities from 1 April 2003, and I met Tim Cantle-Jones, the ONE Board member with specific responsibility for tourism on 13 January 2004 to discuss progress on tourism reform in the North East. Also, officials from the Department and from the Government Office for the North East have been in regular contact with ONE as it has taken on strategic responsibility for tourism in the region, and have also had discussions with the Northumbria Tourist Board. I have asked ONE and the other RDAs to work with their tourist boards and the industry to decide upon the best support structure for the tourism industry in their particular region. I understand that ONE is working towards the introduction of a new structure for the delivery of tourism in the North East. DCMS officials continue to work with the RDAs to help ensure a planned and smooth transition to any new arrangements.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Deaths in Custody

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Solicitor-General if she will list those individuals and organisations *(a)* to whom (i) her Department, (ii) its executive agencies and (iii) the non-departmental public bodies for which her Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultation "Deaths in custody: a review of the role and practices of the Crown Prosecution Service": a consultation paper, and *(b)* from whom each received a response. [151653]

The Solicitor-General: An initial consultation paper for the "Deaths in Custody: A review of the role and practices of the Crown Prosecution Service" was sent to 151 people at the end of April 2002. 37 Consultees responded.

An all-day seminar was held on 21 May 2002 to discuss the review. 83 people attended that seminar. The report; "Deaths in Custody: a review of the role and practices of the Crown Prosecution Service" was sent out to 217 people. 18 agreed to be named as contributing to the report.

Some MPs were consulted, including those on the Home Affairs Select Committee, Joint Human Rights Committee and the Parliamentary Labour Party and Constitutional Affairs Committee. Also consulted were the judiciary, police, prisons, coroners, overseas DPPs, the legal and medical professions, academics, civil liberties groups, victims and interest groups and members of the general public who expressed an interest.

The 18 people who contacted my office agreeing to their contribution to the report being made known are as follows:

Name	
Jonathan Laidlaw	Counsel
Gerald Butler QC	Counsel
Anthony Heaton-Armstrong	Former Chairman of Review of Coroners
Louise Christian	Christian Khan
Dr. Roy Palmer	HM Coroner, Southern District of Greater London
Lindsay Pennell	Victim Support

Name	
Selena Lynch	Coroner for Inner South District Greater London
Lord Campbell of Alloway QC, ERD	—
Dr. Margaret Stark	Association of Forensic Physicians (formerly Association of Police Surgeons)
Dr. Guy Norfolk	Association of Forensic Physicians
Phil Pavey	CRE
Robert Johnson	Anoka County Attorney, US
Win Griffiths	MP
Nogah Ofer	Hickman & Rose
Daniel Machover	Hickman & Rose
Wendy Towers	PCA (at that time)
Kathleen Lowe	Law Society
Margaret Warren (for her late husband, Peter Warren)	Member of the public

Hutton Report

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Solicitor-General if the Attorney-General will discuss with Lord Hutton the investigation of the source of the leak of Lord Hutton's findings to Mr. Trevor Kavanagh of *The Sun*, with reference to the witness summons clauses of the Criminal Procedure and Investigation Act 1996. [152519]

The Solicitor-General *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* The Attorney-General does not propose to discuss this matter with Lord Hutton. Lord Hutton set out the process for those to receive embargoed copies of his report. The number of advance copies and the associated undertakings of confidentiality were agreed between each of the parties and Lord Hutton.

WALES

Correspondence

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many letters from hon. Members from Wales he answered during *(a)* June, *(b)* July, *(c)* August, *(d)* September, *(e)* October and *(f)* November 2003; and if he will make a statement. [150059]

Mr. Hain: Details of correspondence from hon. Members from Wales answered in June to November 2003 are as follows:

	Number
June	2
July	7
August	1
September	3
October	3
November	5

During that period, the Wales Office also answered 238 other letters and dealt with over 2,500 inter-departmental letters.

As the hon. Member is aware, post devolution most of the executive functions of the Secretary of State for Wales now rest with the National Assembly for Wales.

Hon. Members also take greater opportunity to raise matters personally rather than in writing.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

India

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of poverty levels within the Indian state of Jharkhand. [152411]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The latest official figures on poverty that relate to the State of Jharkhand pertain to the year 1999–2000 (National Human Development Report 2001); at this time Jharkhand was part of the state of Bihar. The percentage of people under the official poverty line was 42.6 per cent. out of the total population of 99.9 million. DFID has not undertaken an independent poverty assessment in the State of Jharkhand.

Iraq

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether there are UK representatives on the International Advisory and Monitoring Board in Iraq. [152408]

Hilary Benn: The United Kingdom is not represented on the International Advisory and Monitoring Board for Iraq (IAMB). Its members are representatives of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development and the World Bank. The IAMB's role is to provide for the independent monitoring of the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI), so it would not be appropriate for a party to DFI spending decisions to be represented on it.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 24W, on Iraq, who the voting members are of the Programme Review Board which approves Coalition Provisional Authority plans for expenditures from the Development Fund for Iraq; and who the Department's secondees are to the Coalition Provisional Authority. [152403]

Hilary Benn: The voting members of the Iraqi Coalition Provisional Authority Program Review Board (PRB) are representatives of: the Iraqi Minister of Finance; the CPA's Economic Affairs, Governance and Security Policy Offices, and Office of Infrastructure and Operations; the Coalition military (Combined Joint Task Force 7); the Iraqi Council for International Co-operation; and the Governments of the United Kingdom and Australia.

DFID secondees to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad are currently filling the posts of: Director of Operations, Policy Adviser, Financial Adviser, Senior Adviser and Institutional Development Adviser to the Ministry of Public Works, Electricity Adviser, Gender Adviser and Logistics Manager for the food Public Distribution System.

Twelve secondees, directly employed by DFID, are filling a range of posts in CPA South in Basra; and six such secondees are working in CPA Governorate offices in Dhi Qar, Kirkuk and Wasit. A further 25 posts in the CPA in Basra are currently being filled through a DFID contract with the Crown Agents.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1144W, on Iraq, if he will place in the Library reports of the meetings between his Department's staff and Coalition Provisional Authority South regarding the review of projects funded by his Department in Southern Iraq. [152409]

Hilary Benn: We will shortly be publishing an Interim Country Assistance Plan (ICAP) setting out DFID's programme in Iraq over the next two years. The ICAP reflects discussions between DFID staff and the Coalition Provisional Authority (South). A copy will be placed in the Library.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the projects funded by his Department in southern Iraq that have not been subcontracted to local firms. [152410]

Hilary Benn: DFID supports a staffing project which supplies the Coalition Provisional Authority in Southern Iraq with a range of reconstruction policy advisers. This project does not include sub-contracts with local firms.

DFID does, however, fund a number of projects in Southern Iraq which do include sub-contracts with local firms. They are as follows:

The Recovery and Infrastructure Group project is rehabilitating a number of important buildings in Southern Iraq such as hospitals and government buildings. The contract is managed by Halcrow, but local firms carry out all infrastructure work.

Similarly, Halcrow manage a contract to rehabilitate a number of regional offices. Local firms carry out all reconstruction and all materials are procured from local firms.

The Emergency Infrastructure Project is managed by Mott MacDonald. The bulk of funding for this project is spent on international procurement. However, local firms have been contracted to carry out reconstruction work. Goods and materials have also been procured from local firms for this project.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development who the members of the Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority's programme review board are; what criteria were adopted to choose the members of the board; how many United Kingdom representatives are on the board; and what their period of membership is. [151970]

Hilary Benn: The membership of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Programme Review Board (PRB) comprises representatives of: the Iraqi Minister of Finance; the CPA's Economic Affairs, Governance and Security Policy Offices, and Office of Infrastructure and Operations; the Coalition military (Combined Joint Task Force 7); the Iraqi Council for International Co-operation; and the Governments of the United Kingdom and Australia. The UK Government have one representative on the Board, normally the Head of the DFID Office in Baghdad. Membership of the Board is not held in a personal capacity.

Nigeria

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which consultants are retained by his Department to provide the Government of Nigeria with advice on public service delivery and civil service reform; what the value of the contracts with the consultants is; and what the nature of the consultants' brief is. [152381]

Hilary Benn: The requested information is shown in the following table.

No.	*Project title*	*Consultant*	*Consultant's brief*	*Current value (original contract value plus cost of any increases or extensions) (£)*
1.	Public Service Delivery Initiative	Centre for Management and Policy Studies	To provide a team of experts with relevant experience to work with the Government of Nigeria's new Service Delivery Team	54,787
2.	State and Local Government Project (SLGP)	HTS Consulting Ltd.	To enhance the capacity and effectiveness of state and local government in Nigeria to manage resources and ensure delivery of services, in the interests of poor people	20,508,289
3.	Partnership for Transforming Health Services (PATHS)	HLSP Consulting Ltd.	The PATHS programme will assist Nigerian-led initiatives for health system reform	[1]7,181,515
4.	Health Sector Reform Early Start Project: Change Agent Programme (CAPS)	HLSP Consulting Ltd.	CAPS is a sister project to PATHS. It aims to provide two 'Change Agent Programmes' (CAP), one for "Health Sector Reform" and the other for "Immunisation Programme Reform" (IPR)	1,674,128

No.	Project title	Consultant	Consultant's brief	Current value (original contract value plus cost of any increases or extensions) (£)
5.	Access to Justice Programme	The British Council	The Access to Justice Programme's purpose is to support the development of Nigeria-led justice sector reform so that pro-poor policies are implemented	[1]6,583,210
6.	Procurement Agent for Nigeria Contraceptives and Communication against HIV/ Aids Programme	Population Services International (PSI)	The programme will contribute to 90 per cent. of all young adults having access to STD/HIV/AIDS prevention methods by 2005	52,800,000

[1] Inception

Sudan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the levels of *(a)* malnutrition, *(b)* disease and *(c)* destitution in Southern Sudan in (i) December 2001, (ii) December 2002 and (iii) December 2003. [149985]

Hilary Benn: It was not possible to obtain the information on the overall levels of malnutrition in Southern Sudan for the month of December in the years requested. The following table lists rates of malnutrition for November through to February for the years indicated, and at the locations mentioned. These are from NGO surveys. As the NGOs would undertake surveys in areas where high levels of malnutrition were suspected they should not be taken as representative of the whole population. The rates give the proportion of children acutely malnourished. This approximates to the percentage of children who are less than 80 per cent. of the international reference weight for a given height:

Southern Sudan: Rates of malnutrition

Percentage

County	2001	2002	2003
Aweil East	13.9	n/a	25
Aweil South	n/a	21.1	22.1
Aweil West	13.9	n/a	n/a
Gogrial	3	n/a	n/a
Magwe	17	23.1	n/a
Northern Leech	16.4	n/a	n/a
Phou State	16.8	n/a	n/a
Sobat	23.4	n/a	n/a
Twic	25.1	n/a	n/a
Yirol	9.9	n/a	n/a

The only year where we have information on levels of disease in December in Southern Sudan is 2002. Over that year there were outbreaks of measles and whooping cough reported, with 132 cases of whooping cough of whom two died, and 85 cases of measles with three deaths. There were also reports of rabies, but there are no actual numbers of cases affected. Basic health indicators in Southern Sudan are persistently very poor, and among the worst in Africa.

In the absence of information specifically related to destitution we have referred to the monthly report of the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, which provides information on those requiring emergency humanitarian assistance in the form of food aid. The December issue of this report usually gives the harvest assessment and the needs assessment for the following year. For 2001 the main findings were that emergency needs were linked to the presence of insecurity in parts of Bahr-el-Ghazal, Upper Nile and Eastern Equatoria. In 2002 below average harvest combined with insecurity resulted in persisting requirements for humanitarian relief in parts of Bahr-el-Ghazal, Upper Nile and Eastern Equatoria. In 2003 agricultural production was generally good, but need for emergency assistance remained in many communities in Upper Nile and Bahr-el-Ghazal.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148634]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Details of staff who have received Statutory Sick Pay in the periods specified could only be obtained at disproportionate cost to the Department.

DFID is committed to managing sickness absence effectively, and we are making progress in reducing the levels of absence year on year.

Sudanese Refugees

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the humanitarian condition of Sudanese refugees from the Beja community who are living in Eritrea; and if he will make a statement. [151949]

Hilary Benn: We have not made any specific assessment of Sudanese Beja refugees in Eritrea. However, we keep closely in touch with Government of Eritrea, NGO and UN reports/assessments, and are therefore aware of the concern that has recently been raised about the humanitarian situation faced by the Beja refugees.

UK is willing to play its part in the provision of assistance to address humanitarian needs, in any part of Eritrea and with any community, where there are urgent, unmet humanitarian needs.

We have been supporting supplementary food distributions to the Beja in Eritrea through the NGO Dutch Interchurch Aid.

Voluntary Service Overseas

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's

grant to Voluntary Service Overseas *(a)* is this year and *(b)* will be next year; and how many Voluntary Service Overseas volunteers this money supports. [152088]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Under the Partnership Programme Agreement with DFID, the VSO grant for 2004–05 will be £24,460,000. The grant for 2004–05 will be £24,860,000. In the past two years, the grant has made up approximately 75 per cent. of VSO's total income and we have no reason to believe that this will change during 2003–04 and 2005–06.

The total number of volunteers supported by the grant in 2003–04 will be 1505. In 2004–05, the number of volunteers supported is estimated to be 1540.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Homelessness

7. **Chris Grayling:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on homelessness. [152486]

Yvette Cooper: Homelessness is a serious problem affecting families across the country, but particularly concentrated in London. The Government have increased funding to prevent and address homelessness, strengthened the safety net for vulnerable people, and reduced the level of rough sleeping by two thirds. Councils have also cut substantially the number of homeless families in Bed and Breakfast.

Registered Social Landlords

8. **Mr. McWalter:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what plans he has to encourage councils to adopt registered social landlords as principal agents for development. [152487]

Keith Hill: Guidance to local authorities already stresses the need to consider using registered social landlords when funding provision of affordable housing. This will generally provide more dwellings for a given amount of public subsidy and increases choice and competition.

Housing

9. **Dr. Whitehead**: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures he is taking to encourage greater energy efficiency in new house building. [152489]

Phil Hope: The Energy White Paper, published on 24 February, announced that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would start work immediately on the next major revision of the Building Regulations. This work has started and using the energy efficiency provisions of the Building Regulations we aim to bring new standards into effect in 2005.

Mr. Jack: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to assess the impact on North West house builders of his current housing policy. [152481]

Keith Hill: The housing policies in Regional Planning Guidance are monitored by the North West Regional Assembly. A full review of the housing figures in Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) will take place in 2006.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* households, *(b)* people, *(c)* accommodation units and *(d)* dwellings that will fall within the scope of the mandatory houses in multiple occupation licensing scheme proposed in the Housing Bill. [152182]

Keith Hill: The Government estimate that about 120,000 houses in multiple occupation will be licensed under the mandatory licensing scheme proposed in the Housing Bill. It is estimated that 360,000 to 450,000 dwellings up to 720,000 households (including single person households) will be protected by the regime.

Local Government

10. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the review of local government boundaries. [152490]

Mr. Raynsford: The Boundary Committee for England is currently undertaking reviews of the structure and boundaries of local government in the three northern regions prior to referendums on directly elected regional assemblies. There are currently no plans for further reviews of structures and boundaries.

Fire Service

11. **Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with Essex county council on his plans to regionalise the fire service. [152491]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government have no plan to regionalise the Fire and Rescue Service other than in regions which vote in a referendum for an elected regional assembly. No such referendum is proposed in the Eastern region.

Regional Government

12. **Mr. George Osborne** : To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will set a date for the referendum on regional government in the north-west. [152492]

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to hold the referendums in the three northern regions in autumn 2004.

But before a date can be set:

The Boundary Committee must make its recommendations on restructuring local government in two-tier areas; and

Parliament must approve the Orders calling the referendums.

We expect to lay these in Summer.

13. **Mr. Luff:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will meet a delegation from Worcestershire to discuss the report by Professor David Blanchflower and Professor Andrew Oswald on the calculation of an appropriate regional funding adjustment for the county. [152493]

Mr. Raynsford: No. During the formula review, which was completed in 2002 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister looked in some detail at the different geographies, data and methods that could be used to calculate the ACA. Several of the options advocated by Professors Oswald and Blanchflower in their report were examined and rejected during the formula review

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister considered the Oswold and Blanchflower report as part of the written representations received on the local government settlement for 2004–05. However, as we made clear following the recent review it is our intention that the funding formulae will be frozen for at least 2004–05 and 2005–06. There would therefore be little purpose in the suggested meeting.

Beaches

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether beaches form part of functional flood plains for the purpose of planning policy guidance. [152715]

Keith Hill: Planning policy guidance note (PPG) 25 defines the functional flood plain as the unobstructed or active areas within the land at risk of river and coastal flooding shown on indicative flood plain maps prepared by the Environment Agency where water flows regularly in times of flood. Areas that are defended are passive until such time as the defences are overtopped or breached and are not regarded as part of the functional flood plain.

The term functional flood plain was primarily coined in connection with river flooding, where the proper functioning of a river flood plain serves to reduce the impact of flooding on other areas. However, since most beaches are flooded by tides twice a day, and are undefended they could logically be considered to be functional flood plains, as could undefended areas above mean high water that are flooded by the sea on a regular basis. There may be instances where a storm beach created by extreme high waters has its crest above the flood level with an annual probability of occurrence of 0.5 per cent. In such a case the storm beach itself might not be classified as functional flood plain because of the very long periods between potential flooding events.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons beaches are not part of the definitions of land contained within planning policy guidance; and if he will take steps to ensure that they are. [152716]

Keith Hill: Beaches are part of the definition of land within planning policy guidance. Control under the planning system extends to the seaward boundary of local planning authorities, which is generally taken to be the mean low water mark unless statutory provisions state otherwise at a particular location. Any development on a beach above mean low water would thus be subject to planning control. Planning policies in national or regional guidance, where they are relevant, would be material planning considerations in the formulation of development plans and the determination of applications for planning permission.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which planning policy guidance notes cover proposed development on beaches. [152717]

Keith Hill: Planning policy guidance notes (PPGs) cover all land that is subject to control under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, namely all land within local authority boundaries. In coastal areas, the seaward boundary of local authorities is generally taken to be mean low water. Thus the planning system and all the PPGs would cover relevant developments within a local authority, including that on the intertidal or supratidal areas of beaches above mean low water. Particular consideration is given to development in coastal areas, including that on beaches, in PPG 20 Coastal Planning and in PPG 25 Development and flood risk.

Dame Shirley Porter

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on progress being made in removing the damehood from Dame Shirley Porter. [152193]

Yvette Cooper: The Government do not comment on individual honours cases.

Homebuy Loans

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Homebuy loans were made to *(a)* those in social housing, *(b)* those on housing waiting lists and *(c)* key workers in London in 2002–03. [152018]

Keith Hill: A total of 332 Homebuy loans, funded by social housing grant, were approved for property purchases during 2002–03.

A Housing Corporation survey, "CORE Sales", identified 242 of sales on Homebuy terms carried out in London during 2002–03. Of these:

(a) 88 per cent. were to households in social housing;

(b) a further 11 per cent. were to households who were not in social housing but who were on a local authority waiting list or common housing register.

(c) The Housing Corporation's investment system shows that there were eight Homebuy loans to key workers in London approved during 2002–03.

It should be noted that a further 1,400 key workers in London were assisted under the Starter Home Initiative in 2002–03—many of whom received equity loans similar to the Homebuy model.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how and by which department housing benefit in respect of tenants whose properties *(a)* are managed by arm's length management organisations, *(b)* have been the subject of large-scale voluntary transfers and *(c)* are council owned is paid; for what reasons they are not all paid on the same basis as the social security fund; and what the effect of the method of funding is on central Government housing allocations to each type of operator. [148065]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

Local authorities are responsible for the payment of housing benefit to eligible claimants. Housing benefit is paid as a rent rebate to local authority tenants and rent allowance to tenants of private landlords (including individual private landlords, housing associations and registered social landlords); tenants whose properties are managed by arm's length management organisations remain local authority tenants.

Currently as part of the housing benefit scheme local authorities in England receive a subsidy to reimburse them for correctly determined housing benefit claims.

Responsibility for payment of the indirect housing benefit subsidy element, which for English authorities was previously distributed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, will be transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions from April 2004. This element represented the 5.5 per cent. residual subsidy paid to authorities for rent allowance, council tax benefit and non-housing revenue account rent rebates, which supplemented the 95 per cent. direct subsidy that the Department for Work and Pensions already pay; from April this year the Department for Work and Pensions will pay all HB/CTB benefit subsidy as a direct grant, payable at 100 per cent. for correct claims.

In addition responsibility for rent rebate subsidy will transfer to the Department for Work and Pensions from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister from April 2004. As a result of the transfer of all housing benefit and council tax benefit funding streams to the Department for Work and Pensions, a full review of the subsidy rules has been undertaken in order to produce a simpler, clearer system for reimbursing local authorities.

Housing allocations take no account of these arrangements.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list *(a)* the 10 local authorities which are due to receive the greatest percentage increases in grant in the financial year 2004–05 and *(b)* the amounts of those increases. [152326]

Mr. Raynsford: Having adjusted for changes in function, the 10 largest percentage increases in grant are tabled as follows:

Local authority	*Adjusted 2003–04 grant*	*2004–05 grant*	*Change*	*Percentage change*
Oadby and Wigston	2.689	3.002	0.312	11.6
Blaby	3.744	4.101	0.357	9.5
South Staffordshire	4.743	5.158	0.415	8.7
Milton Keynes	152.958	166.097	13.139	8.6
North Somerset	104.058	112.921	8.863	8.5
Congleton	3.609	3.909	0.299	8.3
Telford and the Wrekin	116.443	125.771	9.328	8.0
Cambridgeshire	279.796	302.047	22.252	8.0
Reading	89.805	96.933	7.128	7.9
Thurrock	109.162	117.776	8.615	7.9

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who the members of the *(a)* Housing Action Trust Liverpool, *(b)* Audit Commission, *(c)* Housing Action Trust Stonebridge, *(d)* Buildings Regulations Advisory Committee and *(e)* Housing Corporation were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151807]

Keith Hill: The details of the members, their term of office in each case and whether they are remunerated are listed in the following tables:

Building Regulations Advisory Committee as at January 2004[1]

Member	*First appointed*	*Re-appointed*	*Expiry*
Allen, Paul	1 February 1998	1 February 2001	31 January 2004
Brown, Tony	1 February 2001		31 January 2004
Cassar, May	1 February 2002		31 January 2005
Conway, John	1 February 1998	1 February 2001	31 January 2004
Cowans, Julie	1 February 1998	1 February 2001	31 January 2004
Finn, Michael	1 July 1991	1 January 2002	31 December 2004
Gibson, David	1 February 1998	1 February 2001	31 January 2004
Holliday, David	1 February 2002		31 January 2005
Jones, Philip	1 October 2000	1 October 2003	30 September 2006
Mills, Christopher	1 February 2001		31 January 2004
Roberts, Phil	1 February 1998	1 February 2001	31 January 2004
Sheehan, Frank	1 October 2000	1 October 2003	30 September 2006
Smith, David	1 February 1998	1 February 2001	31 January 2004
Soane, Alastair	1 February 2001		31 January 2004
Stanton, John	1 February 2001	1 February 2003	31 January 2006
Sullivan, Lynne	1 February 2002		31 January 2005
Thirumoolan, Arumugathasan	1 February 2002		31 January 2005
Walsh, Sean	1 October 2000	1 October 2002	30 September 2004
Warburton, Peter	1 February 2002		31 January 2005
Williams, Kelvin	1 October 2000	1 October 2003	30 September 2006
Wright, Clare	1 February 1998	1 February 2002	31 January 2005
Young, Janet	1 February 2002		31 January 2005

[1] None receive remuneration.

Member	*First appointed*	*Re-appointed*	*Expiry*	*Remuneration*
The Housing Corporation[1]				
Armitage, Eric (Deputy and Chair Registration Committee)	1 October 1997	1 October 2000	30 September 2004	Yes
Arthur, Richard (Chair of Registration and Super Committee)	1 October 2000		30 September 2004	Yes
Button, Sheila (Chair of Finance and Audit Committee)	1 October 1997	1 October 2000	30 September 2004	Yes
Dixon, Peter (Chair)	1 October 2003		30 September 2006	Yes
Drew Smith, Sheila	1 December 2002		30 September 2005	Yes
Duncan, Michael (Chair of Investment Committee)	1 October 2000		30 September 2004	Yes
Fawcett, Julie	1 December 2002		30 September 2005	Yes
Higgins, David	24 March 2003		Ex-officio	No
Huka, Geraldine	1 October 2001		30 September 2004	Yes
Hutchinson, Yvonne	1 July 1998	1 October 2001	30 September 2005	Yes
Moledina, Shaukat	1 December 2002		30 September 2005	Yes
Monckton, Ivan	1 April 1999	1 January 2003	30 September 2005	Yes
O'Neill, Sandi	1 December 2002		30 September 2005	Yes
Perry, Norman	2 October 2000		Ex-officio	No
Winckler, Andrew	6 April 1998	1 October 2001	30 September 2005	Yes
Housing Action Trust–Liverpool[1]				
Allen, Nicola	1 October 2002		30 June 2005	Yes
Chape, Alan	1 October 2002		30 June 2005	Yes
Clark, Eileen	8 February 1993	1 May 2002	30 June 2005	Yes
Dykes, Rodney (Deputy Chair)	8 February 1993	1 June 2000	30 June 2005	Yes

Member	First appointed	Re-appointed	Expiry	Remuneration
Gallimore, Marjorie	8 February 1993	1May 2002	30 June 2005	Yes
Hardaker, Nick	12 October 2003		30 June 2005	Yes
Hubbard, Charles	1 July 1994	1 July 2000	30 June 2004	Yes
Kemp, Erica	1 September 1999	1 September 2002	30 June 2005	Yes
Parker, Graham	7 March 1999	7 March 2002	30 June 2005	Yes
Pettitt, John	1 May 2002		30 June 2005	Yes
Ridley, Paula (Chair)	26 February 1992	8 February 1999	30 June 2005	Yes
Housing Action Trust—Stonebridge[1]				
Ainger, Barbara	1 November 2000	1 November 2003	31 December 2007	Yes
Balogun, Julie-Ann	1 November 2003		31 December 2007	Yes
Bamford, Terence	1 November 2000	1 November 2003	31 December 2007	Yes
Bolaji, Hakeem	1 November 2000	1 November 2003	31 December 2007	Yes
Bragman, Paul	1 December 2003		31 December 2007	Yes
Ferguson, Jennifer	1 November 2003		31 December 2007	Yes
Harrod, Richard	1 June 2002	1 November 2003	31 December 2007	Yes
Magloire, Estella	1 November 2003		31 December 2007	Yes
Maloney, Colum	1 June 2002	1 November 2003	31 December 2007	Yes
Pickering, Caroline (Chair)	17 July 2000	1 November 2003	31 December 2007	Yes
Wilson, Peter	1 December 2003		31 December 2007	Yes
Audit Commission[1]				
Bowen, John	1 September 2001		31 October 2004	Yes
Bundred, Steven	1 November 2003		Ex-officio	No
Dixon, Jennifer	1 November 2003		30 April 2006	Yes
Filkin, Elizabeth	1 November 1999	1 May 2003	30 April 2004	Yes
Hart, Graham	1 November 1999	1 May 2003	30 April 2004	Yes
Hoyle, Roger	1 January 2002		30 June 2005	Yes
Jones, Peter	1 November 2003		30 April 2006	Yes
Lane, Pauline	1 December 2000		30 April 2006	Yes
Lemos, Gerard	1 December 2000		30 April 2006	Yes
Lyons, Michael	1 November 2003		30 April 2006	Yes
Moss, David	1 December 2000		30 June 2004	Yes
Pomeroy, Brian (Chair of Audit Committee)	1 May 2003		30 April 2006	Yes
Scott, Ros	1 November 2003		30 April 2006	Yes
Smith, Peter	1 November 2003		30 April 2006	Yes
Strachan, James (Chair)	5 November 2002		4 November 2005	Yes

[1] As at January 2004

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who the members of the *(a)* Rent Assessment Panel Greater Manchester and Lancashire, *(b)* Rent Assessment Panel London, *(c)* Rent Assessment Panel Merseyside and Cheshire, *(d)* Rent Assessment Panel Northern, *(e)* Rent Assessment Panel Southern and South Eastern, *(f)* Rent Assessment Panel Yorkshire, *(g)* Rent Assessment Panel East Midland, *(h)* Rent Assessment Panel South Western and *(i)* Rent Assessment Panel Chilterns, Thames and Eastern were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151809]

Keith Hill: A list of the members of the Rent Assessment Panels has been made available in the Library of the House.

An appointment as part-time member is for a (renewable) period of five years. Part-time members are remunerated on a daily or half-daily fee basis according to the number of hours worked. Presidents and vice-presidents receive a salary.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who the members of the *(a)* Advisory Committee Justices of the Peace in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, *(b)* Better Regulation Task Force, *(c)* New Millennium Experience Company and *(d)* Civil Service Appeals Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151821]

Mr. Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is as follows:

Advisory Committee on Justices of the Peace in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside

Chairs and members receive no remuneration except expenses. (See Table A)

Better Regulation Task Force

Chairs and members receive no remuneration except expenses. (See Table B)

Responsibility for New Millennium Experience Company rests with my hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

Civil Service Appeals Board

The Chair, Deputy Chairs and members all receive remuneration. (See Table C)

Table A: Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside

Position	Name of appointee	Term of appointment held
Chairman	Mr. R. Bracegirdle, JP	1999–2007
Member	Mrs. B. Parker, JP	1996–2004
Member	Reverend G. Rainford	1998–2006
Member	Mrs. E. A. Midgley	2000–08
Member	Mr. S. F. Shipway , JP	2001–09
Member	Mr. B. Rigby, JP	2002–10
Member	Mrs. S. E. Edwards , JP	2002–10
Member	Mr. A. J. Wallace	2002–10
Member	Mrs. C. A. Hamilton, JP	2003–11
Chairman	Mr. J. R. Bisby, JP	2001–09
Member	Mr. J. P. A. Tuley	1996–2004
Member	Mrs. C. Beesley, JP, BA	1998–2006
Member	Mrs. M. A. McCaldin, JP	1998–2005

Table A: Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside

Position	*Name of appointee*	*Term of appointment held*
Member	Mr. M. J. Fisher	1999–2007
Member	Miss H. M. Pape-Hughes	2000–08
Member	Dr. R. B. Henig, CBE, JP	2001–09
Member	Dr. E. A. M. Roberts, JP	2001–06
Member	Mrs. C. Lomas , JP	2002–10
Chairman	Mr. D. Winthrop, JP	1999–2007
Member	Mr. R. T. G. Lord	1996–2004
Member	Mrs. U. J. B. Walton, JP	1997–2005
Member	Mr. J. E. Hurst	1999–2007
Member	Mrs. J. H. Rigby, JP	2000–06
Member	Mrs. M. A. P. McKenzie-Murdoch, JP	2001–09
Member	Mr. T. A. Harris	2000–07
Member	Mr. J. A. Lark, JP	2002–10
Member	Mrs. C. Rourke, JP	2002–10
Chairman	Mr. P. F. Robinson	1996–2004
Member	Mr. E. Bolton, JP	1997–2005
Member	Mrs. A. N. W. Chapman, JP	1997–2005
Member	Mr. B. Holden, JP	2000–04
Member	Mr. P. W. Watkins	2003–07
Member	Mr. G. R. Hill, JP	2001–09
Member	Mrs. G. N. Rostron, JP	2002–10
Member	Mr. C. J. Clark	2002–10
Member	Mrs. V. Whittam, JP	2003–11
Chairman	Mrs. E. A. Parkinson, JP	1999–2007
Member	Mrs. B. Duxbury, JP	1998–2004
Member	Mrs. M. Fishwick, JP	1998–2004
Member	Mr. B. M. Mulligan, JP	1999–2007
Member	Mr. M. J. Povey, JP	1999–2007
Member	Mr. J. M. Edwards	2000–08
Member	Mr. J. A. McGowan, JP	2001–09
Member	Mrs. D. M. Dunne , JP	2002–10
Member	Mrs. G. Lewis	2002–10
Member	Mr. M. R. Malik	2002–10
Chairman	Mr. M. Cresswell, JP	1996–2005
Member	Mrs. J. Armistead, JP	1996–2005
Member	Mrs. J. M. Winstanley, JP	1996–2005
Member	Mrs. H. S. Harvey	2000–08
Member	Councillor K. J. Helsby, MBE,	2000–08
Member	Revd. F. D. Smith	2002–11
Chairman	Mr. E. G. Hubert	1997–2007
Member	Mr. J. P. Hyndman , JP	1999–2004
Member	Mrs. V. S. McGrory, JP	2002–04
Member	Mrs. J. E. Hinkley, JP	1997–2007
Member	Mr. E. Ahmed, JP	1999–2007
Member	Mrs. J. R. Smale	1999–2008
Member	Mr. I. D. Hurdley, JP	2002–10
Member	Mrs. L. B. Sable, JP	2002–10
Member	Miss B. E. Farragher	2003–10
Chairman	Mrs. J. L. Berry, JP	1998–2005
Member	Mrs. B. E. Creme , JP	1999–2005
Member	Mr. S. Terry, JP	1999–2008
Member	Mrs. B. H. Warnock, JP	1999–2008
Member	Mr. M. M. Elder	1999–2005
Member	Mr. G. Sable	1999–2008
Member	Mr. M. J. Taylor	2000–08
Member	Mr. R. S. Rees	2003–11
Member	Ms A. R. Malach	2003–11
Member	Ms K. A. Rigby, JP	2003–11
Member	Mrs. K. J. Heppleston-Baines, JP	2003–11
Member	Mr. M. B. Enderby, JP	2003–11
Member	Ms G. D'Silva, JP	2003–11
Member	Mr. L. W. T. Collier, JP	2003–11
Chairman	Mrs. A. Sykes, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mrs. J. Cooper, JP	1996–2007
Member	Mr. M. J. Garner, JP	1996–2004
Member	Mr. M. Flacks, JP	1998–2007
Member	Mr. D. R. Jones	1998–2007
Member	Mrs. M. C. Bray, JP	2001–10
Member	Mrs. J. H. Molineux, JP	2001–10
Member	Mr. A. K. Hazell	2001–10
Member	Mr. I. P. Armstong	2002–10
Chairman	Mr. R. Matthews, JP	1997–2004
Member	Mrs. D. Ainsworth, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mrs. M. C. Ashworth	1999–2004
Member	Mr. J. M. Coupe	2001–07
Member	Mr. R. Needham, JP	1996–2007
Member	Dr. A. Rauf, JP	1999–2007
Member	Mrs. C. V. Ashworth-Lord, JP	2001–10
Member	Mrs. G. J. Wilde, JP	2001–10

Table A: Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside

Position	*Name of appointee*	*Term of appointment held*
Member	Mr. J. K. Davies	2003–10
Chairman	Mrs. P. A. Holt, JP	1999–2008
Member	Mr. F. Sullivan	1994–2005
Member	Mr. J. Connor, JP	1994–2005
Member	Mr. B. Ball	1996–2008
Member	Mr. D. Bentham, JP	1997–2005
Member	Mrs. S. Portman, JP	1999–2008
Member	Ms C. R. Borders, JP	2002–11
Member	Mr. R. S. Smith, JP	2002–11
Member	Mrs. J. L. Dunn	2002–11
Member	Mr. D. Marsh	2002–11
Chairman	Mr. A. Roberts	1995–2005
Member	Mr. S. B. Berry	1996–2004
Member	Mr. D. J. Wildgoose, JP	1994–2005
Member	Mrs. M. A. Evans, JP	1995–2008
Member	Mrs. D. A. Manton, JP	1995–2008
Member	Mrs. H. C. Jenkins	1999–2008
Member	Mrs. P. P. King, JP	2002–11
Member	Mr. J. T. Jackson, JP	2002–11
Member	Dr. C. S. Raju	2002–11
Chairman	Mr. D. Baggott, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mrs. B. E. Ilett, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mrs. J. Hurlston	1997–2006
Member	Mrs. S. Marston, JP	1997–2006
Member	Mrs. A. Saltsman, JP	1997–2006
Member	Mrs. J. A. Watson	1999–2008
Member	Mr. M. Watson	2002–10
Member	Mr. A. Bridge, JP	2002–10
Member	A. J. H. Van Weerdenburg, MBE, JP	2002–10
Chairman	Mrs. J. Brown. JP	1995–2004
Member	Mr. M. J. Harkin, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mrs. G.L. Williams, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mr. J. F. Connor, JP	2000–07
Member	Mrs. M. Lucas, JP	2000–07
Member	Dr. R. J. M. Gray	2001–10
Member	Mr. G. Homer, JP	2001–10
Member	Mr. J. R. Marsh	2001–10
Member	Miss. K. J. Holder	2001–10
Chairman	Mrs. M. Wall, JP	1996–2005
Member	Mr. C. B. F. J. D'Souza	2000–08
Member	Mrs. C. E. Hitchmough	2000–08
Member	Mrs. M. Griffin, JP	2001–04
Member	Mr. G. Cunliffe, MBE, JP	2002–11
Member	Mr. T. M. Gregory, JP	2002–11
Member	Mr. A. Bent, JP	2003–11
Member	Mr. J. Winter, JP	2003–11
Chairman	Mr. B. R. Worster-Davis, QBE, JP	2002–07
Member	Mrs. M. H. Davitt, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mr. J. Alexander, JP	1997–2004
Member	Mr. J. G. Moore. JP	1996–2007
Member	Mrs. C. E. Humphries	1999–2007
Member	Mrs. K. P. Pye, JP	2002–10
Member	Mr. A. D. Disley	2003–11
Member	Mrs. L . Murray	2003–11
Member	Mr. E. G. Grimes	2003–06
Chairman	Mr. M. W. Evans	1998–2007
Member	Mrs. S. E. Mashiane-Talbot , JP	1998–2007
Member	Mrs. D. E. Morton, JP	1998–2007
Member	Mrs. D. Bogle, JP	2002–10
Member	Mr. B. M. Cave, JP	2002–10
Member	Mr. G. Green, JP	2002–10
Member	Mrs. M. K. Kakar, JP	2002–10
Member	Prof. J. L. Verbov, JP	2002–04
Member	Prof. R. S. Jones, QBE, JP	2002–07
Member	Miss J.G. Keller	2003–10
Chairman	Mr. G. H. Lloyd, JP	1996–2005
Member	Mrs. E. A. Barnett, JP	1994–2005
Member	Mr. D. J. Allman, JP	1999–2008
Member	Mrs. A. Shute,JP	1999–2008
Member	Dr. A. D. Havard	1999–2008
Member	Mr. F. J. Hyland, JP	2003–11
Member	Ms D. Bridson, JP	2003–11
Member	Dr. P. A. Downham,	2003–11
Member	Mrs. J. R. Carver	2003–11
Chairman	Mrs. H. Williams, JP	1996–2004
Member	Mr. S. Cooper, JP	1996–2004
Member	Mrs. J. M. Dawkins, JP	1996–2005
Member	Mr. B. Corbin	1998–2007
Member	Mr. D. McCaughrean	2000–09

Table A: Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside

Position	*Name of appointee*	*Term of appointment held*
Member	Ms. J. A. Ash	2000–09
Member	Mrs. E. A. Sinker, JP	2001–09
Chairman	Mr. B. T. Spencer	1998–2004
Member	Mrs. M. Brooks, JP	1995–2004
Member	Dr. P. J. Tunstall, JP	2002–04
Member	Mrs. D. M. Hilton, JP	1998–2007
Member	Mr. D. Wainwright, JP	1998–2007
Member	Mr. E. Hazeldine	1998–2007
Member	Mr. B. W. Bawden, JP	2002–10
Member	Mr. A. G. Dudley, JP	2002–10
Member	Miss C.A. Roberson	2002–10
Chairman	Mr. M. H. Middleton, JP	1997–2005
Member	Mr. R. J. Pullin, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mrs. S. Spencer, JP	1995–2004
Member	Mrs. P. M. Snowden, JP	1997–2007
Member	Cdr. C. J. Arthurs, JP	2002–11
Member	Mrs. C. A. Alien, JP	2002–11
Member	Mrs. D. S. Shaw	2003–11
Member	Mr. R. McWilliams	2003–11

Table B: Better Regulation Task Force

Position held	*Name*	*Term of appointment*
Chair	Mr. D. Arculus	2002–05
Deputy Chair	Ms T. Graham QBE	1997–2006
Member	Ms M. Alderson	1999–2004
Member	Mr. S. Falder	1999–2004
Member	Mr. M. Gibbons	2002–06
Member	Dr. K. Hawkins	2002–06
Member	Ms D. Hutton CBE	1999–2006
Member	Mr. S. Petch	2000–04
Member	Dr. I. Peters	2000–06
Member	Dr. P. Rowlatt	2000–06
Member	Ms J. Russell	1998–2006
Member	Ms S. Stubbs	2002–06
Member	Mr. T. Sweeney	2002–06
Member	Mr. R. Symons CBE	2002–06
Member	Mr. S. Ward	1999–2004
Member	Ms V. Younghusband	2003–05

Table C: Civil Service Appeal Board

Position held	*Name*	*Term of appointment*
Chairman	Mr. J. H. Davies	1999–2005
Deputy Chair	Mr. M. E. G. Fogden CB	1997–2005
Deputy Chair	Mr. J. Sheldon	2001–04
Member	Mr. G. Bertram CB	2001–04
Member	Ms S. Brown	1998–2004
Member	Mr. J. F. Carling	1999–2005
Member	Mr. E. McGivern CB	1998–2004
Member	Mr. D. W. Rayson	1999–2005
Member	Mr. G. L. Reid CB	1999–2005
Member	Mr. A. Turner CBE	1999–2005
Member	Mr. J. Turner CB	2000–05
Member	Mr. I. Ward	2001–04
Member	Mrs. C. Alderson	2000–06
Member	Mr.A. J. Audley	2001–07
Member	Mrs. L. J. Clare	1998–2004
Member	Mrs P. Cryer	1999–2005
Member	Mr. D. Evans	2000–06
Member	Mrs. D. Hall Hall	1996–2004
Member	Mr. P. J. Kelly	1999–2005
Member	Mr. T. Thomson	1998–2004
Member	Mr. F. Winrow	1999–2005

Swale Borough Council

Mr Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many requests have been made to the Legal Department of Swale Borough Council under Section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998 since 24 November 2003. [152337]

Phil Hope: It is a matter for Swale Borough Council to answer.

Thames Gateway

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many additional housing units have been targeted for *(a)* Castle Point and *(b)* Canvey Island since March 2000. [152438]

Keith Hill: The housing growth targets for Castle Point (and Canvey Island) have been determined by Regional Planning Guidance 9 and are set out within Essex County Council's current Structure Plan, which relates to the period 1996 to 2011. For that period, Castle Point is required to accommodate 2,400 new dwellings.

The East of England Regional Assembly is in the process of preparing new Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England (RPG14). This will contain housing growth targets for local authority areas within the region (including Castle Point).

TREASURY

Advancing Enterprise Summit

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) who the speakers are at the Advancing Enterprise summit; [150764]

(2) what the sources of funding were for the Advancing Enterprise summit; [150766]

(3) what the *(a)* total cost and *(b)* cost to the United Kingdom Government is of the Advancing Enterprise summit; [150767]

(4) if he will list the representatives of *(a)* the United Kingdom Government, *(b)* the United States Administration and *(c)* business and other representatives attending the Advancing Enterprise summit. [150768]

John Healey: The speakers and chairs at the conference 'Advancing Enterprise: Britain in a Global Economy' on 26 January 2004 were my right hon. Friends the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State for Education and for Trade and Industry, myself and:

Arun Sarin
Dr. Jean-Pierre Gamier
Sir Terry Leahy
Dr. Eric Schmidt
Paul Walsh
Hans Eichel
Charlie McCreevy
Rodrigo Rato y Figaredo
Jean Claude Trichet
Gerrit Zalm
George Cox

Charles Dunstone
Caroline Plumb
Dame Marjorie Scardino
Lee Williams
William H. Gates
Sir Howard Davies
Brendan Barber
Sir Roy Gardner
Digby Jones
Ben Verwaayen
Mervyn King
Niall Fitzgerald
The hon. Donald Johnston
John Snow
Dr. Alan Greenspan
Lord Browne of Madingley
Richard Lambert
Professor Richard C. Levin
Sir Tom McKillop
Professor Alison Richard
Gus O'Donnell
Ed Balls

A list of the senior business leaders and Government representatives who attended has been placed in the Library of the House.

The costs of the conference are being met entirely from HM Treasury's resources. The aggregated cost of all Departmental events will be included in HM Treasury's annual report.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what allowance is made in the Government Actuary's projection of future immigration for *(a)* the number of people whose claims for asylum are rejected who remain in this country, *(b)* the number of people who overstay their visas and *(c)* the ending of visa restrictions for inhabitants of new member states of the EU. [152857]

Ruth Kelly: The latest (2002-based) official population projections for the United Kingdom were published by the Government Actuary's Department in December 2003. The migration assumptions underlying the projections use the internationally agreed definition of a migrant. A migrant is defined as someone who changes his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least a year so that the country of destination becomes the country of usual residence.

For the long-term migration assumptions, an allowance is made for asylum seekers who are granted leave to stay in the UK. It is assumed that asylum seeker applications will be processed within twelve months and no allowance is made for failed asylum seekers who may remain in the UK for longer than 12 months as there is no reliable evidence on which to base such an estimate.

The migration assumptions include an allowance for persons who enter the UK as short-term visitors but are subsequently granted an extension of stay for a year or longer. No allowance is made for those who overstay their visas illegally, again as there is no reliable evidence on which to base such an estimate.

Failed asylum seekers who do not leave the UK and people who overstay visas illegally are part of the illegal population. The size of this group is particularly difficult to estimate because they often do not show up in official records and are motivated to remain hidden. This is also a problem experienced by most other EU countries: in a recent survey only one country out of 15 reported that they made any allowance for illegal migration in their population projections.

No allowance has been made for the possible effects of enlargement of the European Union. At present, the precise impact of this change cannot be predicted, although recent Home Office research has concluded that the effect on the UK is likely to be fairly small.

Carers

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of carers aged 65 years and over. [152757]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Sandra Gidley, dated 4 February 2004:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what estimate has been made of the number of carers aged 65 years and over. (152757)

Figures from the Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales indicate that there were 944,650 people aged 65 and over providing unpaid care. The table below shows the distribution of these carers according to the number of hours of care provided per week.

Number of people aged 65 and over providing unpaid care, 2001: England and Wales

Care provided per week	*Number*
1 to 19 hours	501,318
20 to 49 hours	102,182
50 or more hours	341,150
Total number of carers	944,650

Source:
Table SO25 Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales

Child Mortality

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the main cause of death in children aged under 15 years was in 2003. [152564]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tim Loughton, dated 4 February 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what the main cause of death in children aged under 15 was in 2003. (152564)

The latest year for which data are available is 2002. The attached table shows the percentage of deaths by major causes of death and age groups in children aged under 15.

Percentage of deaths by age-group for main causes of death[1], England and Wales, 2002[2]

Cause of death	*All ages under 15*	*Under 1*	*1–4*	*5–14*
Infectious and parasitic diseases	6.1	6.5	9.4	3.3
Neoplasms	13.5	1.5	16.2	26.4
Blood and blood-forming organs	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.5
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic disorders	4.8	2.8	7.1	5.8
Mental disorders	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.5
Nervous system	10.7	8.6	11.4	12.8
Circulatory system	4.7	4.0	5.1	5.3
Respiratory system	6.7	6.5	6.4	7.2
Digestive system	3.1	2.8	3.8	2.9
Pregnancy and childbirth	8.6	19.8	1.3	0.0
Congenital malformations	15.4	20.5	17.6	7.8
Signs, symptoms and ill-defined conditions	9.4	19.6	3.4	1.0
External causes of death	14.3	5.3	16.3	23.9
Other causes	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.7
Number of deaths	2,377	1,001	551	825

[1] The causes of death were selected using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes. The cause groups presented are entire chapters from the ICD-10 classification, as follows:
Infectious and parasitic diseases—AOO-B99;
Neoplasms—COO-D48;
Blood and blood-forming organs—D50-D89;
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic disorders—EOO-E90;
Mental disorders—FOO-F99;
Nervous system—GOO-G99;
Circulatory system—I00–I99;
Respiratory system—JOO-J99;
Digestive system—KOO-K93;
Pregnancy and childbirth—OOO-O99;
Congenital malformations—QOO-Q99;
Signs, symptoms and ill-defined conditions—ROO-R99;
External causes of death—V01-Y89.
[2] Figures are for the number of deaths occurring in the calendar year.

Children With Heart Defects

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the incidence was of children born with heart defects in each year since 2000. [152548]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tim Loughton, dated 4 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for the incidence of children born with heart defects in each year since 2000. (152548)

The figures for 2000 and 2001 (the latest year available) are shown in the table below.

Number of children born in England and Wales with heart defects[1], and rate of occurrence: 2000 and 2001

Year	*Number*	*Rate[2]*
2000	1,250	20.6
2001	1,069	17.9

[1] Heart defects was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes 145,6,147.1.
[2] Rate per 10,000 live and stillbirths.
Source:
Health Statistics Quarterly no. 16: Annual update—Congenital anomaly statistics, notifications 2001 England and Wales.

Congenital Anomaly statistics for 2002 are scheduled for publication in April 2004.

Financial Services

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people he estimates are actively using internet-based stockbroking services in the UK; and how many he estimates are doing so in other EU states. [152387]

Ruth Kelly: In the table are the latest available figures for the number of clients using online stockbroking services in the UK. This information is taken from a survey conducted for the Association of Private Client Investment Managers and Stockbrokers by ComPeer.

	Number of clients
Q3 2003	461,848
Q2 2003	432,556
Q1 2003	348,700
Q4 2002	362,040

Figures for other EU states are not readily available.

Future Tax Yield

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Report of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Inland Revenue for the year ending 31 March 2003 (Cm 6050), Page 107, Table 5, Note 5, in which year the inclusion of *(a)* taxpayer favourable adjustments and *(b)* additional sums arising from the method of estimating future tax yield prior to that employed in 2002–03 in calculating the compliance performance of the Large Business Office for publication in Inland Revenue annual reports first commenced; who first sanctioned the use of each of these methods to calculate Large Business Office compliance performance; and on what date sanction was given. [152218]

Dawn Primarolo: In April 1998 the Large Business Office introduced an automated system to record adjustments arising from its enquiries into large companies' tax affairs. Inadvertent design faults resulted in the incorrect reporting of the results referred to. As soon as these faults were identified, they were corrected and the results for 2002–03 have been reported on the correct basis

Illegal Meat Imports

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the Department's progress in tackling illegal meat imports. [152602]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Laura Moffat) on 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 423W.

Two of the four new detector dogs enter into full operational service in mid-February and the remaining two are expected to do so early in April.

Pensions

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* residential and *(b)* other properties have been purchased under the Self Investment Personal Pension system since its introduction. [152163]

Ruth Kelly: The purchase of residential properties is not currently permitted under the current rules for Self Invested Pension Plans. No figures are available on the numbers of other properties purchased under Self Invested Pension Plans

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the changes proposed in his pre-Budget statement in respect of Self Investment Personal Pensions upon *(a)* availability of housing for rent, *(b)* the amount and proportion of second and holiday homes, *(c)* the availability of housing in areas with a high preponderance of second and holiday homes and *(d)* other aspects of the housing market. [152164]

Ruth Kelly: The Government's technical paper "Simplifying the taxation of pensions: the Government's proposals" proposes allowing pension funds to invest in all types of investments, including residential property. The impact of this change, if introduced, will depend on the extent to which trustees and administrators decide that residential property is a suitable pension scheme investment.

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what criteria will apply to the purchase of residential properties under his proposed changes to Self Investment Personal Pensions. [152165]

Ruth Kelly: The Government's technical paper "Simplifying the taxation of pensions: the Government's proposals" proposes allowing pension funds, including Self Invested Pension Plans, to invest in all types of investments, including residential property. There will be no specific criteria relating to residential properties. There will be a single set of simple, flexible investment rules underpinning the simplified regime.

The private use of pension scheme assets by a scheme member will be subject to a tax charge.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the revenue to be raised from stamp duty land tax on leases in the next tax year. [152608]

Ruth Kelly: The yield from stamp duty land tax on the premium and rental elements of leases is forecast to be around £450 million in 2004–05.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the percentage of commercial rental contracts liable for stamp duty land tax. [152610]

Ruth Kelly: Approximately 60 per cent., of new commercial leases will pay no stamp duty land tax on the rental element. This compares with only 9 per cent. of leases that were exempt as regards the rental element under the previous stamp duty regime.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning the future of e-conveyancing following the implementation of stamp duty land tax. [152611]

Ruth Kelly: None.

Thalidomide Trust

Mr. Singh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made by the Inland Revenue to establish the Thalidomide Trust's right to make distributions tax exempt under section 329 of the Finance Act 1996. [152301]

Dawn Primarolo: Discussions between the trustees of the Thalidomide Trust and officials of the Inland Revenue about the tax treatment of payments to beneficiaries of the trust are continuing. No conclusion has yet been reached.

US-UK Enterprise Agreement

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the *(a)* measures introduced and *(b)* events taking place as part of the US-UK enterprise agreement; [150763]

(2) what meetings officials from his Department had with representatives of the United States Administration regarding the US-UK enterprise agreement; [150765]

(3) what the *(a)* total cost and *(b)* cost to the United Kingdom Government is of the US-UK enterprise agreement. [150769]

John Healey: The initiatives established in the US-UK Enterprise Agreement are:

a scholarship programme;

a forum to share best practice in enterprise education between school and related enterprise education providers and universities in the two countries;

a joint government-business meeting to discuss common productivity challenges and policy implications;

closer links between technology transfer offices in the US and the UK through the exchange of technology transfer professionals;

a review to study the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers between Europe and America which we are taking forward with our European partners including France, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands.

Treasury officials have had a number of meetings and discussions with their counterparts in relevant departments in the United States Administration, and are in regular contact with US officials to develop these proposals.

The scholarships will offer the opportunity for entrepreneurs from the UK to study in the US. The budget for these scholarships is in the process of being finalised. Events to follow up the agreement will be announced in due course.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Accident and Emergency Departments

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time was for treatment in each of Northern Ireland's accident and emergency departments in each month of the last year for which figures are available; and what steps he is taking to reduce these figures. [151320]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

In order to relieve pressure on hospital accident and emergency departments, Boards and Trusts are providing a range of additional services during the winter months, including extra community care provision, which helps to reduce demand on hospital services. Additional support is also being provided in primary care, where a flu vaccination programme has been running, which is targeted at over-65s and those at risk. Work will also be taken forward in all acute hospitals during 2004–05 on improving the flow of emergency patients.

Acquired Brain Injury

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people suffered a traumatic head injury in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [152420]

Angela Smith: Traumatic head injuries cover a broad spectrum of severity of injury including those who do not present at hospital, those who attend Accident and Emergency Departments but are not admitted, those who are admitted for treatment and those who die before reaching hospital. Information is available only on those admitted to hospital. The table as follows provides figures on the number of admissions to hospital in Northern Ireland where the primary diagnosis is for head injury and, of these, the number of admissions where the primary diagnoses are fractures to the skull or facial bones or intracranial injuries. Information is provided for the last five years for which data are available.

Total number of Admissions to Hospital[1] with injuries to the head for the years 1998–1999 to 2002–2003

Years	*All head injuries*	*Skull fracture or intracranial injury*
1998–1999	7,273	2,573
1999–2000	7,126	2,407
2000–2001	7,027	2,284
2001–2002	7,236	2,352
2002–2003	6,874	2,399

[1] Deaths and Discharges are used as an approximation for Admissions

Source:
Hospital Inpatients System

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reason the Department for Employment and Learning decided to provide no further funding to the ReConnect training facility for people with acquired brain injury. [152421]

Jane Kennedy: In December 2003, the Department for Employment and Learning advised ReConnect that its application for ESF assistance, under the second round of applications for the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity, was unsuccessful.

The Department runs an open competition for such funding. On this, as in the previous round, there were more acceptable projects than budget available to meet their bids. Applications are scored, by selection panels, against the requirements of the Programme's measures and the funding available is allocated to those which score highest. The ReConnect application did not score highly enough to receive an allocation.

Unsuccessful bidders have a right of review, for which the closing date was 30 January 2004. A request for review has been received from this project, which is due to be heard in early February 2004.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total expenditure has been on providing community-based training and rehabilitation for people with acquired brain injury in Northern Ireland by *(a)* the Department for Employment and Learning and *(b)* the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. [152422]

Jane Kennedy: The information is as follows:

(a) Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)

In the last eight years, ERDF and ESF assistance of £5.1 million and DEL match funding of £520,000 has been paid to two organisations providing community-based training where participants have included people with acquired brain injury.

It is not possible to disaggregate the share of funding which might be attributed to the number of participants with acquired brain injury.

(b) Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

The information is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ards Hospital

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to broaden the range of services offered on the Ards Hospital site. [150737]

Angela Smith: The Ulster Community and Hospital HSS Trust is currently developing plans to redevelop the Ards Hospital site. The Trust's proposals include the provision of modern Local Health and Social Care facilities, which will consider a range of services, including Primary Care Services, Mental Health Services, Children's Services including Community Paediatric and Family and Child Care Services, In-Patient, Out-Patient and Diagnostic Services.

The Trust is also presently undertaking a review of the Community Hospital Services currently provided on the Ards Hospital site and when this review is completed in the Spring of this year, a decision will be taken on the final configuration of these services.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend the opening hours of the minor injuries units at *(a)* Bangor and *(b)* Ards Community Hospitals. [150739]

Angela Smith: The Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust is presently engaged in a review of its Community Hospital Services. This review will be considering the relationship between Emergency Services at the Ulster Hospital and Minor Injuries provision located at Ards and Bangor Community Hospitals.

I understand that the review will be completed in the spring of this year, and a decision will then be made on the proposed configuration of services at Bangor and Ards Community Hospitals, which may include the extension of opening hours for Minor Injury Services within the Trust.

Civil Service

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to resolve the Northern Ireland Civil Service pay dispute; and if he will make a statement. [152442]

Mr. Pearson: Extensive negotiations over several months did not result in an agreed pay deal for the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration this year. Management side presented an offer worth 3.67 per cent. on 5 November. As this could not be agreed, and Trade Union side declined to negotiate within the 3.67 per cent. envelope. We took the decision to proceed to pay the award and communicated this to staff and Trade Union side on 27 November. I have made clear to Trade Union side that the 3.67 per cent. deal is the maximum that can be paid. We are, however, open to exploring other reasonable means of resolving the dispute. A meeting of the Central Whitley Council between Trade Union and Management sides took place on 29 January 2004, and we are considering the points discussed then.

Members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service working in the Northern Ireland Office are subject to separate pay negotiations involving three Unions: Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance, Public and Commercial Services and the First Division Association.

A formal offer of 3 per cent. has been made to the Unions.

Community Support Programme

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his assessment is of the Community Support Programme in Northern Ireland. [152583]

Mr. Spellar: The Community Support Programme is an important collaborative initiative between the Department for Social Development and all 26 district councils aimed at developing a core local community infrastructure across Northern Ireland. This infrastructure supports the delivery of a number of important Government programmes, such as Neighbourhood Renewal and Investing in Health, which aim to tackle the root causes of deprivation and social exclusion, as well as other Government objectives around poverty through the provision of funding for frontline advice and information agencies, such as Citizens' Advice Bureaux and Independent Advice Centres.

The work of the Community Support Programme has been strengthened by the implementation of the recommendations of the policy document "Beyond the Centre", published in 2000, which provide a clearer focus on people-centred community development and on targeting social need. On the basis of "Beyond the Centre", all 26 councils are developing integrated community support plans for their respective areas based on an assessment and prioritisation of need.

On the basis of numerous examples of good practice arising from this work, the Community Support Programme now has significant opportunities for growth and development, both as a means for better integrating the current multiplicity of local funding streams and as a more robust model for social investment by Government.

Economic Performance

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on economic performance in Northern Ireland over the last five years. [152589]

Mr. Pearson: Evidence suggests that despite the recent global slowdown, the Northern Ireland economy has continued to expand over recent years.

Between March 1999 and September 2003, the number of employee jobs has increased by 46,180 (7.4 per cent.). While the vast majority of new employment is to be found in the service sector, manufacturing output and productivity have continued to rise over the period. Between Q1 1999 and Q3 2003 manufacturing output increased by 18.8 per cent., while manufacturing productivity increased by 40.9 per cent. Exports by Northern Ireland's manufacturing firms increased by 15.9 per cent. between 1998–99 and 2002–03, however, in recent years the level of manufacturing sales and exports has shown a small decrease.

Elective Surgery

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the extent of elective surgery conducted in Northern Ireland on citizens of the Irish Republic in 2003; and if he will make a statement. [150758]

Angela Smith: The total number of elective admissions to surgical specialties in Northern Ireland by residents of the Republic of Ireland during the 2002–03 financial year was 319, which comprises 136 normal in-patients and 183 day cases.

Residents of countries within the European Union are entitled to treatment if they are taken ill while visiting another European Union state. Patients may also be transferred to another country under formal contractual arrangements between individual hospitals or health boards if the treatment required is not available locally. Consequently, residents from the Republic of Ireland are sometimes treated in Northern Ireland and vice versa.

Employer's Liability Insurance

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the costs of Employer's Liability Insurance in Northern Ireland. [152588]

Mr. Pearson: Insurance is a reserved matter. However, in Northern Ireland the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment recently undertook a Business Insurance Survey of some 3,000 firms. The results of the survey are currently being analysed and will be published shortly.

Ethnic Minority Funding

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was provided to ethnic minorities in each of the last five years, broken down by project. [148816]

Mr. Pearson: The information required will require some time to collate. I will respond to the hon. Lady when the information is available.

Fisheries

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial assistance the Government will give Northern Ireland's *(a)* fishermen and *(b)* processors during the tie-up scheme for cod fishing boats beginning on 14 February. [152415]

Mr. Pearson: I propose to introduce transitional aid for fishermen most affected by the cod recovery measures and who voluntarily cease all fishing activities during the closure of the Irish Sea to cod fishing from 14 February to 30 April 2004 inclusive. The scheme aims to provide assistance to the owners of eligible vessels who tie-up for the full 11-week closure. There are no plans to compensate processors. The majority of the Northern Ireland fleet may continue to fish and therefore provide continuity of locally sourced raw materials, which local processors normally supplement with raw materials from other parts of Ireland and the United Kingdom throughout the closure.

Government Solicitors

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money was paid to solicitors employed by the Government in the drafting of the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 in *(a)* 2000–01, *(b)* 2001–02, *(c)* 2002–03 and *(d)* the current financial year, broken down by firm. [152212]

Mr. Pearson: Assembly Bills introduced by the Northern Ireland Executive during devolution and Orders in Council made under the Northern Ireland Act 2000 while the Assembly is suspended are drafted by the Office of the Legislative Counsel of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Simmons and Simmons, appointed in June 2001 as specialist solicitors to assist with the policy development process leading up to the preparation of the Energy (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, were paid the following amounts (including VAT) for this work:

	£
(a) 2000–01	Nil
(b) 2001–02	178,381
(c) 2002–03	608,541
(d) 2003–04	Nil—the Energy Order was made in February 2003

Heroin Addicts

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registered heroin addicts there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [150667]

Angela Smith: The latest available figures show the number of registered heroin addicts in Northern Ireland as at 31 December of each year 1998–2002 is as follows:

Year	*Number of registered addicts*
2002	213
2001	244
2000	233
1999	226
1998	161

This information is published in the 'Northern Ireland Drug Addicts' Statistical Information Bulletin'. The next bulletin is due for publication on 24 February 2004, copies of which will be available on the DHSSPSNI website, Internet address: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/index.html. Copies of previous bulletins can be obtained from the Drug and Alcohol Information and Research Unit.

Home Helps

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent changes have been made in Home Help Services in Northern Ireland. [152353]

Angela Smith: The Department's policy for the provision of the Home Help Service in Northern Ireland is set out in guidance to Health and Social Services Boards issued on 12 November 1980. The guidance introduced a Model Scheme for the Provision of a Home Help Service which has operated successfully from that time and the Department have not made any recent changes to the Model Scheme. HSS Trusts operate Home Help Services within the framework provided by the Model Scheme and in the context of local priorities and available resources.

Hospital Discharges

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients' hospital discharge was delayed while awaiting community care packages in each of the last six years. [150740]

Angela Smith: The number of delayed discharges recorded as a snapshot of the position at yearly intervals from October 2000 to October 2003 (the latest date for which such information is available), and for February 1999 and February 2000, is shown in the following table.

	Number of delayed discharges
February 1999	249
February 2000	319
October 2000	327
October 2001	456
October 2002	392
October 2003	390

Note:
Information on numbers of delayed discharges has been collected in respect of the position at the last day of each month from August 2000, and previous to that date by annual census held in February.

Hospital Trolley Waits

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 7 January, *Official Report*, column 406W, on hospital trolley waits, how many patients included in trolley wait totals for 2002–03 *(a)* were discharged from hospital and *(b)* left hospital without obtaining a ward bed. [151089]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Lung Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals died from lung cancer in 2003; and what the mean survival time was following diagnosis. [150751]

Angela Smith: In 2002, the latest year for which deaths data are available, a total of 777 individuals died from lung cancer (466 men, 311 women).

The most recent estimate of the five-year relative survival rate for lung cancer patients, based on persons diagnosed in 1993–96, is 9 per cent.

Maternity Hospital

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress towards the construction of a new regional maternity hospital. [150741]

Angela Smith: The new regional maternity hospital will be constructed in line with the timetable for the strategic redevelopment of the Royal Victoria Hospital site, which envisages that building work will begin in 2007 and be completed by 2010.

The Royal Group of Hospitals Trust is currently preparing a business case for the development of the new maternity hospital. In developing the business case, the trust has engaged with Service Commissioners, neighbouring Trusts, medical and midwifery staff, along with users of the service. The Trust is expected to submit a business case to the Department by June 2004.

Medical Treatments

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many sufferers from rheumatoid arthritis in Northern Ireland are waiting to commence anti-TNF drugs; and if he will make a statement. [152355]

Angela Smith: At 15 December 2003, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 389 patients waiting to commence anti-TNF drug treatment in Northern Ireland. I announced on 13 January that I would provide additional resources for anti-TNF drugs for 2004–05 and the detailed funding allocations will be made shortly in consultation with HSS Boards and Trusts.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals are awaiting the commencement of treatment with *(a)* beta interferon and *(b)* glatiramer for multiple sclerosis. [152357]

Angela Smith: At 20 January 2004 there were 66 people awaiting the commencement of treatment with these medicines. The decision as to which medicine is appropriate is a matter for the patient's doctor, in consultation with the patient, when treatment is to begin.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recent meeting between the Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office and the Ulster Political Research Group. [151612]

Jane Kennedy: The Government have always said that we will work with those who want to engage in democratic politics. At our recent meeting I recognised the constructive approach of the UPRG but made clear that the many social and economic problems affecting loyalist working class areas cannot be tackled effectively against a background of widespread and continuing paramilitary activity. Attacks on prison officers' homes; hoax bombs at schools and elsewhere in the city; and involvement in drugs and organised crime are totally unacceptable. I also made clear, regarding Maghaberry, that we are working with the Prison Service to develop a safe regime for prisoners and prison officers, but that control of the prison by prison staff would be maintained at all times.

Minority Ethnic Voluntary Organisations

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons he has decided to limit provision for meeting the commitments of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister funding for minority ethnic voluntary organisations to a one-year period; and what assessment he has made under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 of the equality impact of his decision. [152131]

Mr. Spellar: In its first Programme for Government the Northern Ireland Executive committed itself to

"bring forward, consult on and implement cross-departmental policies to tackle racial inequality within a strategic framework"

including

"targeted support for minority ethnic groups and projects".

The funding scheme for minority ethnic voluntary organisations was established in April 2001 and work commenced on developing the strategy.

A draft Race Equality Strategy was issued for public consultation on 25 February 2003 and an independent evaluation of the funding scheme was commissioned in June 2003. The final evaluation was received in December 2003.

I propose to bring forward the final version of the Race Equality Strategy by the summer. In bringing forward the strategy, I will wish to consider very carefully the independent evaluation of the funding scheme and the views of key stakeholders.

In the circumstances, I thought it prudent to extend the existing scheme for a period of one year. Any change to the existing funding arrangements in light of the new strategy will, of course, be subject to assessment under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

MRI Scanning

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are awaiting MRI scanning in Northern Ireland, broken down by health trust area. [151178]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

National Institute for Clinical Excellence

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines extend to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [152329]

Angela Smith: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) are only applicable to England and Wales. The Department are considering how guidelines issued by NICE can be used in the context of Northern Ireland's health and social services.

Neurosurgery

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients in Northern Ireland are awaiting *(a)* inpatient admission and *(b)* initial outpatient assessment, in neurosurgery. [151215]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the Written Answer given on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 997W, Question 148845.

Patient Admissions/Assessments

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients are awaiting *(a)* in-patient admission and *(b)* initial out-patient assessment in Northern Ireland; and what the comparative statistics were at 12-month intervals over the last five years. [151216]

Angela Smith: The most recent waiting list data available shows the position at 30 September 2003. Data in the tables refer to the position at this date in 2003 and at the same date in the previous five years.

Number of people waiting for in-patient admission to hospital (includes normal in-patients and day cases)

Quarter ending 30 September	*Number*
1998	46,428
1999	46,689
2000	50,184
2001	56,713
2002	60,190
2003	54,257

Source:
CH1 parts A and B.

Number of people waiting for a first out-patient appointment (includes cancellations and deferrals)

Quarter ending 30 September	*Number*
1998	86,152
1999	98,712
2000	119,298
2001	133,974
2002	146,818
2003	151,752

Source:
CH3 parts 1 and 2.

Physiotherapy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients were awaiting physiotherapy assessment in each six-month interval over the last five years. [151222]

Angela Smith: Information on the number of individuals awaiting physiotherapy assessment is not collected centrally. However, information is collected centrally on completed waiting times for a first outpatient appointment of an episode of care with a community physiotherapist. The total number of persons attending their first outpatient appointment, and the number of those who had waited for six months or more for their appointment, is shown in the following table. The information is in respect of six-month intervals from the quarter ending 30 September 1998 to the quarter ending 30 September 2003 (the latest date for which such information is available).

Number of persons who attended their first outpatient appointment with a community physiotherapist, and number and percentage who had waited for six months or more for appointment, quarters ending 30 September 1998 to 30 September 2003

Quarter Ending:	*Total number of persons*	*Persons who waited six months or more*	
		Number	*Percentage*
30 September 1998	9,863	14	0.1
31 March 1999	10,679	19	0.2
30 September 1999	11,837	51	0.4
31 March 2000	11,704	83	0.7
30 September 2000	11,492	188	1.6
31 March 2001	13,446	142	1.1
30 September 2001	12,754	324	2.5
31 March 2002	14,154	475	3.4
30 September 2002	14,303	441	3.1
31 March 2003	15,644	570	3.6
30 September 2003	12,798	420	3.3

Planning Applications

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average length of time is for processing planning applications in Northern Ireland. [152580]

Angela Smith: The average time taken by the Department of the Environment's Planning Service to issue a final decision in respect of planning applications in Northern Ireland over the last three previous years is as follows:

Average time in Northern Ireland

Year	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Total average days	139	134	137
Total average weeks	20	19	20

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time is for a planning appeal hearing to take place in Northern Ireland after an application for an appeal has been lodged. [152581]

Mr. Paul Murphy: As the Planning Appeals Commission is a tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body, I have asked the Chief Commissioner to write to the hon. Gentleman directly in connection with the information requested.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time taken by his Department was to respond to letters of objection from people regarding planning applications in 2003. [152594]

Angela Smith: It is Planning Service's policy to acknowledge all letters of objection within three working days, and where specific questions are raised, it is the policy to issue a reply within 15 working days.

However, it is often difficult to deal with specific questions at an early stage of the processing of an application, as detailed consideration will not have taken place by the divisional planning office and consultee replies will not have been received. More substantive replies can issue at a later stage. In addition, all those who object to planning applications are informed in writing of the final decision and the reasons for that decision.

Police Officers

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of police officers in Northern Ireland, broken down by rank, are *(a)* female and *(b)* from an ethnic minority. [151319]

Jane Kennedy: The figures requested as at 1 January 2004 are shown in the following table.

Percentage

Rank	*Female*	*Ethnic Minority*
ACPO	12.50	
Chief Superintendent	10.34	
Superintendent	2.74	
Chief Inspector	10.61	
Inspector	7.99	
Sergeant	11.27	0.09
Constable	17.70	0.28
Student officer	36.74	1.40
FTR	8.71	
PTR	36.13	

Police Ombudsman

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints have been referred to the office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland for investigation since its formation; and how many of these complaints have resulted in *(a)* successful prosecution and *(b)* resolution between the parties. [150682]

Jane Kennedy: The Police Ombudsman advises that since her office opened on 6 November 2000, and up until 31 December 2003, a of total of 10,535 complaints have been made to her office. Of these complaints 4,598 have been referred for investigation, and prosecutions by the Director of Public Prosecutions have resulted in two police officers being convicted. In the same period the informal resolution procedure has resulted in 878 complaints being resolved between the parties involved.

Police Service

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the Full Time Reserve of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [151614]

Jane Kennedy: The Government accepted, subject to the security situation, the recommendation in the Patten report that

"the future police service should not include a Full Time Reserve".

In October 2002 the Chief Constable put to the Policing Board a human resource strategy to meet the staffing needs of the Police Service over the next eight to 10 years which the Policing Board endorsed. This included a phased run-down of the Full Time Reserve over an 18 month period from April 2005, subject to no further deterioration of the security situation and the continued success of the recruitment campaign for the Police Service.

Later this year the Chief Constable will put forward advice to the Board and the Secretary of State on these matters. The Government recognise the major contribution that members of the Reserve have made to the maintenance of law and order in Northern Ireland and the high price that they and many of their families have had to pay in doing so.

Negotiations between Government officials and the Police Federation about severance arrangements for the Full Time Reserve have begun.

Prisons

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what amount was spent on leisure facilities in prisons in each of the last six years. [150734]

Jane Kennedy: The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not spend money on leisure facilities, however, the service does incur costs on recreation and physical education. Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, the amount spent on gym assets including snooker and pool tables for the last six years is:

	Amount (£)
1998–99	13,900
1999–2000	27,275
2000–01	36,234
2001–02	13,847
2002–03	37,970
2003–04	24,814

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners in Northern Ireland are the subject of suicide watch observations; and what the corresponding figure was for the first day of each of the last 12 months. [150745]

Jane Kennedy: Where there is concern that a prisoner may be at risk of self-harm a form IMR 21 is completed to inform staff. This might lead to a period of assessment in the healthcare unit for those deemed to be at a more serious risk. This period of assessment might also include a period of close observation. In the period January-December 2003, the number of IMR 21 forms raised was as follows:

Month	*IMR 21 referrals*
January 2003	11
February 2003	11
March 2003	16
April 2003	16
May 2003	11
June 2003	23
July 2003	15
August 2003	19
September 2003	22
October 2003	24
November 2003	39
December 2003	33

There has been an increase in the number of IMR 21 forms raised during the past year due to the increase in prisoner population and increasing tensions because of separation issues in Maghaberry.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who the members of the *(a)* Probation Board for Northern Ireland, *(b)* Police Authority for Northern Ireland and *(c)* Board of Visitors of Magilligan Prison were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151458]

Jane Kennedy: The information is as follows:

(a) Probation Board for Northern Ireland—Membership: chairman, deputy chairman and 16 members

Name	*Date of first appointment*	*Expiry of appointment*	*Gender*
Chairman			
B. Rowntree	1 December 1998	30 November 2004	M
Deputy chairman			
Mrs. F. Reid[1]	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	F
Members			
Ms J. Daykin	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	F
Mr. C. Flanagan	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	M
Ms M. Gilheany	1 December 2000	30 November 2006	F
Mrs. B .Grant	1 December 2000	30 November 2006	F
Mr. R. Hanna	1 December 2000	30 November 2006	M
Mrs. J. Hillen	1 December 2000	30 November 2006	F
P. Killen	1 December 2000	30 November 2006	M
Mr. A. MacLaughlin	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	M
Mr. P. McAteer	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	M
Miss M. McCann	1 December 2000	30 November 2006	F
Dr. R. McKee	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	M
Mrs. G. Rice	1 December 2000	30 November 2006	F
Mrs .G. Shaw	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	F
B. Stuart	1 December 2000	30 November 2006	M
Mr. W. Tweed	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	M
Ms K. Yiasouma	1 December 2003	30 November 2006	F

[1] Previously member from 1 December 2000.

Notes:

1. Length of each term of appointment: three years
2. Remuneration: Chairman—£25,860 per annum; deputy chairman and members attendance allowance plus travel and subsistence expenses.

(b) Northern Ireland Policing Board

In accordance with the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, the Police Authority for Northern Ireland was dissolved and replaced by the Northern Ireland Policing Board on 4 November 2001. The setting up of the Northern Ireland Policing Board was one of the recommendations contained in the Patten Report.

The board was made up of 19 members—10 political and nine independent. The 10 political members were nominated from among the members of the then Northern Ireland Assembly, in accordance with the d'Hondt process. The nine independent members were appointed by the Secretary of State.

In October 2002, following the suspension of the devolved institutions, the then Secretary of State appointed the current 19 members of the Policing Board for a three year period.

As of 1 January 2004 the members are as follows:

Chairman:

Professor Desmond Rea

Vice chairman:

Denis Bradley

Other members:

Alex Attwood

Viscount Brookeborough

Joe Byrne

Fred Cobain

Brian Dougherty

Sam Foster

Barry Gilligan

William Hay

Tom Kelly

Lord Kilclooney
Pauline McCabe
Alan McFarland
Eddie McGrady
Rosaleen Moore
Ian Paisley Junior
Suneil Sharma
Sammy Wilson

Their remuneration is:

Chairman: £45,000
Vice chairman: £35,000
Independent members £12,000

(c) Board of Visitors members for Magilligan Prison

Chairman:

R. Armitage

Vice chairman:

Mrs. I. Johnston

Members:

J. Campbell
Mrs. R. Craig
Mrs. J. Doherty
Cllr. R. D. McDonnell
S. McGregor
M. McIvor
C. McLaughlin
J. Mitchell
W. A. Mitchell
Mrs. M. D. Nicholl
E. Turner
Mrs. V. A. Von Hoff
Plus one other

Board of Visitors members are generally appointed for three years, but may be appointed for a shorter period. They may be re-appointed for further periods of three years or less, but not more than 12 years in total.

Members of Boards of Visitors receive no remuneration.

Racist Incidents

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many racist incidents were recorded by the police in Northern Ireland in *(a)* January and *(b)* each month in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2002, broken down by constituency; [149228]

(2) how the police categorise different types of racist incident; and how many of each type of incident there has been so far this year. [149230]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested by my hon. Friend has been placed in the Library.

Rating

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with European Union authorities on the issue of industrial de-rating and state aid. [152206]

Mr. Pearson: None. Industrial de-rating in Northern Ireland predated UK accession to the European Union in 1973. Member states were not required to notify pre accession financial support arrangements.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the likely impact of industrial de-rating on *(a)* small and medium-sized and *(b)* large businesses in Northern Ireland. [152207]

Mr. Pearson: Our assessment on the likely impact on *(a)* small and medium-sized and *(b)* large businesses came from a variety of different sources, including studies by DTZ Pieda, Invest NI and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), as well as submissions made during the public consultation exercise in 2002 by the DETI and DFP Assembly Committees and local economists. The policy paper published in April last year included the Regulatory Impact Assessment, New TSN and Equality Impact Assessment and all this evidence was summarised, analysed and considered objectively and the various options were discussed openly with representatives of the business community before a final decision was taken.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the likely impact of his decision to rate vacant premises on *(a)* small and medium-sized and *(b)* large businesses in Northern Ireland. [152208]

Mr. Pearson: Our assessment on the likely impact on all vacant commercial property, and in particular, small commercial property came from a variety of different sources, including the Regulatory Impact Assessment, New TSN, Equality Impact Assessment, as well as submissions made during the public consultation exercise in 2002 by the DETI and DFP Assembly Committees and submissions from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). All this evidence was summarised, analysed and considered objectively and the various options were discussed openly with representatives of the business community before a final decision was taken. The impact of this measure will be felt by property owners rather than small businesses that tend to rent property and therefore are unlikely to face a vacant rate cost.

Industrial De-rating

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what mechanisms he has established to monitor the impact of the phasing out of industrial de-rating in Northern Ireland. [152230]

Mr. Pearson: The policy document in relation to the "Rating of Vacant Property and the Removal of Industrial De-rating", published in April 2003, included Equality Impact and Regulatory Impact Assessments. Both these types of assessment require that the policy be monitored and evaluated after a suitable period of time has elapsed to allow the policy to 'bed down', and three years from its introduction is considered appropriate for evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation, following HM

Treasury "Green Book" guidance, would seek to measure outcomes during and after implementation in terms of revenue generated and the main impacts against what would have happened in the absence of the policy.

Social Rented Housing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new houses have been built in the social rented sector in North Belfast in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [152577]

Mr. Spellar: Details of houses started and associated total scheme costs are as follows.

	Houses	*Cost (£ million)*
1997–98	218	9.3
1998–99	210	11.9
1999–2000	325	23.8
2000–01	105	8.1
2001–02	200	16.0
2002–03	254	19.2

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on maintenance and repair of social rented housing in North Belfast in each year since 1997. [152578]

Mr. Spellar: Expenditure by NIHE and Housing Associations on the maintenance and repair of social rented housing in North Belfast, based on Housing Executive Districts 4 and 6, is as follows:

£000

Year	*Maintenance and repair*
1997–98	12,710
1998–99	16,128
1999–2000	14,185
2000–01	13,575
2001–02	13,829
2002–03	13,886

Specialist Drugs

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional funding was provided in 2003 for new specialist prescribed drugs for *(a)* rheumatoid arthritis and *(b)* multiple sclerosis. [150750]

Angela Smith: The additional £3 million allocated to Health and Social Services Boards in the 2002–03 financial year towards the costs of new specialist drug treatments including those for rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis has been made recurrent in the current financial year 2003–04 and increased to £3.1 million to cover inflation.

A further £100,000 made available in September 2002 specifically for infrastructure support for beta interferon treatment for multiple sclerosis has also been made recurrent thus relieving pressures elsewhere in these drugs budgets.

Speech Therapy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals are awaiting speech therapy assessment; and how many of those have waited more than six months. [150736]

Angela Smith: Information on the number of individuals awaiting speech therapy assessment is not collected centrally. However, information is collected centrally on completed waiting times for a first outpatient appointment of an episode of care with a community speech and language therapist. In the quarter ending 30 September 2003 (the latest date for which such information is available), 2,453 persons attended their first outpatient appointment. Of these, 218 (8.9 per cent.) had waited for six months or more.

Sports

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been provided to promote cricket in the Province in each of the last five years. [148817]

Angela Smith: The Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) is responsible for the development of sport in NI including the distribution of public funding to individual sports. Funding from SCNI for the five-year period 1998–2003 for the sport of cricket is:

Cricket	*£*
Exchequer funding	
1998–99	20,000
1999–2000	20,000
2000–01	20,000
2001–02	20,000
2002–03	26,330
Total	106,330
Lottery funding	
1998–99	215,298
1999–2000	212,837
2000–01	282,500
2001–02	57,202
2002–03	16,000
Total	783,837

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been provided to assist the promotion of *(a)* hockey, *(b)* rugby, *(c)* soccer, *(d)* gaelic football, *(e)* hurling and *(f)* other Gaelic Athletic Association sports in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [148818]

Angela Smith: The Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) is responsible for the development of Sport in NI including the distribution of public funding to individual sports.

The following tables provides details of funding from SCNI for the five year period 1998–2003 for the four sports of Soccer, Gaelic Games (including Gaelic Football, Hurling and other Gaelic Athletic Association games), Rugby and Hockey.

Exchequer Funding

£

	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Total
Soccer	50,000	50,000	50,000	59,000	52,500	261,500
	—	—	—	[1]100,000	[1]500,000	600,000
Gaelic Games	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	45,000	165,000
Rugby	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	24,000	88,000
Hockey	65,167	66,443	27,464	61,225	54,902	275,201
Totals	161,167	162,443	123,464	266,225	676,402	1,389,701

[1] These figures indicate the funds allocated to Soccer from the Football Development Centre Programme for 2001–02 and 2002–03

Lottery Funding

£

	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Total
Soccer	677,073	816,616	942,492	642,710	609,131	3,688,022
Gaelic Games	2,703,811	1,303,185	1,694,182	1,025,420	689,962	7,416,560
Rugby	155,526	100,784	312,053	144,000	76,860	789,223
Hockey	322,588	14,000	47,625	199,850	68,800	652,863
Totals	3,858,998	2,234585	2,996,352	2,011,980	1,444,753	12,546,668

Safe Sports Grounds

The money provided by the Safe Sports Ground Programme was made available from financial year 2000–01 for the three sports of Soccer, Gaelic Games and Rugby. The following table shows the funding that was allocated for these sports for the 3-year period 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2003.

£

	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Total
Soccer			1,206,809	784,003	415,188	2,406,000
Gaelic Games			622,085	350,833	507,082	1,480,000
Rugby			136,843	140,612	68,536	345,991
Total			1,965,737	1,275,448	990,806	4,231,991

Tourism (Ards Peninsula/North Down)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to attract more tourists in 2004 to *(a)* the Ards Peninsula and *(b)* the North Down area. [149615]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is working with local councils in the Ards and North Down areas and the Kingdoms of Down regional tourism organisation on a range of tourism promotion initiatives. These include marketing and promotion initiatives and familiarisation trips by international tourism interests/key market representatives. A programme of tourism events is planned for 2004, drawing and improving on their successful last year.

The NITB's Strategic Framework for Action 2004–07, which will drive the tourism agenda for the next three years, will provide a focus and impetus to the growth and delivery of tourism to all areas of Northern Ireland, including the Ards Peninsula and North Down areas.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the current average waiting times are for MRI scanning in Northern Ireland. [151224]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to introduce within the public service agreements set by central Government a commitment to raise Council Tax Benefit take-up rates for pensioners from the current level of 65 per cent. to 90 per cent. within three years; and if he will make a statement. [148241]

Mr. Pond: We have no plans at present to introduce a target for take-up of Council Tax Benefit by pensioners.

Take-up of Council Tax Benefit has historically been lower than for other income-related benefits, take-up by pensioners being lower than for non-pensioners. However, we are keen to ensure that all pensioners entitled to help with their council tax bills are claiming Council Tax Benefit. We have therefore launched a take-up campaign to help support local authorities in encouraging those who may be entitled to claim.

The introduction of Pension Credit also means around 300,000 pensioner households will be newly entitled to Council Tax Benefit. To help facilitate take up, applicants for Pension Credit who also want to claim Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit are sent a claim form to return to their local authority. We have recently also introduced a shortened version of this claim form for pensioners to make the process of claiming even easier.

Pension Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* error rate and *(b)* arrears of work levels were for the last year in which pensions work was done in local offices in the South East region; and what the latest figures are for this work in the new pension centres. [151534]

Malcolm Wicks: The Benefits Agency handled payments to pensioners as well as to people of working age through a network of over 400 social security offices. The Pension Service was launched in April 2002 to provide a more unified and responsive service via a network of 26 pension centres. Directly comparable data is not available in the format requested. However, I can confirm that within the South East Region the level of accuracy reported on Retirement Pension work has remained above the 98 per cent. target throughout the transition, and the levels of outstanding Retirement Pension work have reduced by more than 50 per cent..

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost to the Exchequer, net of savings in means-tested benefits and additional tax revenues, of paying a full basic state pension to each individual, regardless of contribution record, at the rate of the guarantee credit, from the age of *(a)* 65, *(b)* 70 and *(c)* 75 years; and if he will estimate in each case the cost in each of the following four years on the assumption that the pension was then indexed to earnings. [150451]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is set out in the following table.

£ billion

	2004–05	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	*2008–09*
Over 65	9.9	10.2	10.7	11.3	12.1
Over 70	6.9	7.1	7.5	8.1	8.6
Over 75	4.4	4.6	4.9	5.3	5.6

Notes:

1. Figures are in 2003–04 price terms rounded to the nearest £100 million. It is assumed the change comes into effect from April 2004 and only affects basic State Pensions.
2. Gross costs are estimated by the Government Actuary's Department and are consistent with Budget 2003 assumptions. Estimates are all based on the 2002 population projection and allow for recent revisions.
3. The costs take into account income related benefit offsets, which are calculated using the DWP policy simulation model and April 2004 benefit rates.
4. Additional income tax revenue is estimated by the Inland Revenue using 2004 tax rates.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to his Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149336]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department for Work and Pensions actively promotes the better regulation agenda and the use of sunsetting where appropriate.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment guidance 'Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment' advises policy officials to consider time limiting or sunsetting at an early stage of policy development, and gives specific circumstances where sunsetting maybe appropriate.

No Acts for which DWP is responsible containing a sunset clause have been passed since the Department was formed in June 2001.

For most of the Department's business, sunsetting would not be appropriate. For example where primary legislation establishing a benefit or other scheme is drafted on the basis that it will last indefinitely and the details will be set out in secondary legislation, it would normally be inconsistent to time limit this.

HEALTH

"Agenda for Change"

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the projected cost increase in each of the next five years if all members of staff eligible for the Agenda for Change programme receive an annual increase in pay of one pay point in a pay band and successfully pass through the *(a)* foundation and *(b)* secondary gateways. [151144]

Mr. Hutton: The projected basic pay increases under Agenda for Change—2.5 per cent. on average by 2005–06 and 5.9 per cent. in the longer term (compared with 2002–03) in addition to annual pay uplift—assume that all staff will progress annually through pay points and pay gateways up to the maximum of their pay band. These projections also assume that the distribution of staff between the different pay points in a given pay band, taking account of joiners, leavers and annual pay progression, will remain similar to the distribution seen in current National Health Service pay bands. In other words, the additional costs do not arise from pay progression as such (which is a feature of most current NHS pay systems), but from the changes in the basic pay ranges to which NHS staff will be entitled.

Cataracts

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the reasons that Netcare delivers cataract services on behalf of the NHS at a price less than NHS costs. [149029]

Mr. Hutton: All selected preferred bidders for the contracts for new independent sector treatment centres have gone through a rigorous procurement process to ensure that they are fit to deliver high quality clinical services for national health service commissioners. This has been independent of their price or the commercial aspects of the contract.

Netcare has been awarded the contract to provide an innovative mobile theatre solution that will perform over 40,000 additional operations at different sites over

the next five years. The contract has been negotiated at a price less than the comparable NHS cost: this will benefit patients who will benefit from speedier treatment and is a good deal for the NHS.

Consultants

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assumptions his Department has made about the level of take-up of the consultant contract. [151569]

Mr. Hutton: We estimate around 70 to 80 per cent., of consultants are likely to take up the contract this year.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria his Department used to decide on the *(a)* location and *(b)* number of training places for consultants in grown-up congenital heart abnormality. [152166]

Mr. Hutton: The Department makes decisions about the allocation of consultant training places or national training numbers (NTNs) each year. This includes decisions about NTNs in cardiology, which includes adult congenital heart disease.

The decisions are based on intelligence collated from local and national bodies on workforce needs and are a balance of the needs of all medical specialties. The number of NTNs allocated to cardiology is made in consultation with the National Clinical Director for heart disease.

New training places in cardiology are distributed to sites that have available training capacity and where possible are distributed nationally to areas which are most under-resourced.

Contracting Out

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost of procedures contracted out by the NHS to the public sector in the last 12 months. [146304]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not hold centrally information on the cost of procedures contracted out by the national health service to the private sector in the last 12 months. The exception is the independent sector treatment centre programme. One centre is already open at Daventry, and we estimate that, to date, contracted out procedures at Daventry will amount to approximately £1,096,800.

Dentistry

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of dental treatment in *(a)* Brent, *(b)* London and *(c)* England was in each year since 1997. [149898]

Mr. Hutton: The average costs of a course of dental treatment in the general dental service for adults and children in England, London and Brent and Harrow Health Authority (HA) for each financial year are shown in Table 1 for the period 1997–98 to the first half of 2002–03 and for Brent Primary Care Trust (PCT) for the second half of 2002–03 in Table 2.

These costs are for payment made to the dentist for dental treatment. These include the patient charges where applicable. They exclude patient registration payments to the dentists. Some patients may have more than one course of treatment in a year.

The averages for children excludes courses of treatment involving an examination only, which are not paid for separately but covered by the patient registration payment to dentists.

Table 1: General Dental Service—Average cost of dental treatment for 1997–98 to 2002–03 first half

£

	England		*London*		*Brent and Harrow Health Authority*	
	Children	*Adult*	*Children*	*Adult*	*Children*	*Adult*
1997–98	26.1	32.5	36.2	47.2	36.6	45.7
1998–99	28.5	33.5	39.1	48.8	32.8	47.7
1999–2000	29.9	34.8	42.3	51.7	34.0	50.6
2000–01	32.0	35.5	45.7	52.9	37.2	52.6
2001–02	34.5	36.3	48.3	54.7	40.9	54.3
2002–03[1]	35.7	37.4	49.0	57.2	42.2	56.2

[1] Covers period from 30 April 2002 to 30 September 2002.

Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Table 2: General Dental Service—Average cost of dental treatment for 2002–03 second half

£

	2002–03[1] *Children*	*Adult*
England	37.5	37.2
London	50.8	56.1
Brent PCT	39.1	55.4

[1] Covers period from 31 October 2002 to 31 March 2003.

Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists' surgeries in Brent East constituency are accepting new NHS patients. [149905]

Mr. Hutton: Figures collected by the Department are by primary care trust (PCT) and not by constituency.

Brent PCT has:

51 dental surgeries accepting children (latest data available—January 2004);

13 dental surgeries accepting national health service charge-paying patients i.e. those not exempt from payment (latest data available—January 2004); and

44 dental surgeries accepting NHS charge-exempt patients (latest data available—October 2003).

The nhs.uk website at: www.nhs.uk/root/administration/reports/dentalreport.asp gives information on dental practices and whether or not new patients are being accepted.

Note:

1. Some surgeries may accept more than one type of patient. So the overall total of 64 surgeries includes some surgeries which are not accepting new NHS patients.
2. There may be some dental surgeries which are not included in the nhs.uk figures. nhs.uk figures have been used here because that source gives information on dentists' acceptance practices.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private dental practices there are in (i) the Castle Point and Rochford Primary Care Trust and (ii) the Essex Strategic Health Authority. [152441]

Dr. Ladyman: At August 2003 there were 21 general dental service practices in Castle Point and Rochford Primary Care Trust and 248 practices in Essex Strategic Health Authority.

Information on the number of private dental practices is not collected centrally. Generally, few dental practices are wholly private.

NHS Students (Child Care)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he intends to introduce the scheme to help with child care costs for national health service-funded students with children aged up to five years. [152771]

Mr. Hutton: It is intended to introduce a scheme to assist national health service-funded students with childcare costs in September 2004. Officials are currently developing proposals for the scheme.

Drug Prices

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate of drug price inflation his Department is using in budgets for financial year 2004–05. [144145]

Mr. Hutton: In calculating budgets for 2004–05, we are providing for a growth of about ten per cent. in the estimated outturn expenditure on drugs for 2003–04. The percentage growth is based on a combined figure of volume and price inflation, and we are thus unable to break it down to obtain separate figures.

General Practitioners

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many general practitioner vacancies there were in *(a)* Brent Primary Care Trust, *(b)* London and *(c)* England in each year since 1997; [150812]

(2) how many general practitioner vacancies there were on average in each London primary care trust in each year since 1997. [150813]

Mr. Hutton: The Department's annual general practitioner (GP) recruitment and retention and vacancy (RRV) survey started in 2000.

The number of GP vacancies in England and in each London strategic health authority since 2000 is shown in Table 1. The number of GP vacancies in each London primary care trust (PCT) including Brent PCT, for 2003, is shown in Table 2. This is the first year vacancy data has been collected at PCT level.

The RRV survey is a count of all GP vacancies that have occurred during each year. It will include existing posts that doctors have left and also new posts created to increase the workforce, even where they were filled very quickly. Thus, the increase in vacancies in part is a result of there being more posts overall, reflecting the Government's plan to increase the GP workforce.

Table 1: England GP vacancy numbers by London SHA, 2000 to 2003

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
England total	[1]1,143	[2]2,345	[3]2,487	[4]3,245
of which:				
North Central London SHA	22	78	80	53
North East London SHA	18	55	17	104
South East London SHA	38	101	81	179
South West London SHA	16	[2]42	[3]29	[4]45
North West London SHA	49	60	93	78

[1] In 2000 four HAs did not respond to the survey. These made up parts of: Thames Valley SHA, County Durham & Tees Valley SHA, North & East Yorkshire & N Lincolnshire SHA and Trent SHA.
[2] In 2001 two HAs did not respond to the survey. These made up parts of: Surrey & Sussex SHA and South West London SHA.
[3] In 2002 four HAs did not respond to the survey. These made up parts of: Surrey & Sussex SHA, South West London SHA, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire & Rutland SHA and Hampshire & Isle of Wight SHA.
[4] In 2003 one PCT in South West London SHA did not respond to the survey.
Note:
Years prior to 2003 have been mapped to current SHA areas 2003 numbers were collected directly from PCTs. Previous years vacancy numbers were collect from Health Authorities.
Source:
Department of Health GP Recruitment, Retention and Vacancy surveys, 2000–03.

Table 2: GP vacancy numbers by London PCT, 2003

ISHA	*Total*
England Total	3,245
of which:	
London All	459
of which:	
North Central London All	53
of which:	
Barnet PCT	27
Camden PCT	8
Enfield PCT	4
Haringey PCT	9
Islington PCT	5
North East London All	104
of which:	
Barking and Dagenham PCT	7
Chingford, Wanstead and Woodford PCT	12
City and Hackney PCT	22
Havering PCT	10
Newham PCT	15
Redbridge PCT	13
Tower Hamlets PCT	13
Walthamstow, Leyton and Leytonstone PCT	12
North West London All	78
of which:	
Brent PCT	16
Ealing PCT	1
Hammersmith & Fulham PCT	5
Harrow PCT	28
Hillingdon PCT	9
Hounslow PCT	3
Kensington and Chelsea PCT	9
Westminster PCT	7
South East London All	179
of which:	
Bexley PCT	24
Bromley PCT	37
Greenwich PCT	32
Lambeth PCT	32
Lewisham PCT	21
Southwark PCT	33

Table 2: GP vacancy numbers by London PCT, 2003

ISHA	*Total*
South West London All	[1]45
of which:	
Croydon PCT	24
Kingston PCT	3
Richmond and Twickenham PCT	4
Wandsworth PCT	14

[1] One PCT (Sutton & Merton PCT, South West London SHA) did not respond to the survey.

Notes:

No figures for PCTs are available before 2003 as previous years vacancy numbers were collected from Health Authorities.

Source:

Department of Health GP Recruitment, Retention and Vacancy survey 2003.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average amount of funding provided to a general practitioner surgery is in *(a)* England and *(b)* the London Borough of Havering. [150371]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not collect information at a London borough level, but rather at primary care trust (PCT) level. The answer therefore compares the national position with Havering PCT. The average funding per general practitioner practice in England in 2002–03 was £464,000. The average funding per GP practice in Havering PCT was £347,000. However, the number of practitioners per practice in Havering PCT as at March 2003 was lower (at 2.58) than the national average (at 3.76). Consequently, when practitioner numbers are used, the average cost per practitioner in England was £124,000, while the equivalent figure in Havering PCT was £134,000.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to recruit general practitioners; what the current national ratio of patients to general practitioners is; what the ratio is in the Portsmouth area; and how many general practitioner vacancies there are in *(a)* Portsmouth and *(b)* South East Hampshire. [151993]

Mr. Hutton: The Government are committed to recruiting and retaining more general practitioners (GPs). A range of measures have been implemented including financial incentives, extended options for flexible working and improved family friendly policies.

The ratio of patients to unrestricted principals and equivalent (UPE) general practitioners (GPs) in England and in Portsmouth Primary Care Trust is shown in table 1.

The number of GP vacancies recorded in the GP recruitment and retention vacancy survey between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2003 in Portsmouth PCT and East Hampshire PCT and Fareham and Gosport PCT is shown in table 2.

This is a count of all GP vacancies that have occurred during each year. It will include existing posts that doctors have left and also new posts created to increase the work force, even where they were filled very quickly. Thus, the number of vacancies in part is a result of there being more posts overall, reflecting the Governments plan to increase the GP work force.

The Department of Health collects figures by PCT only, not by constituency.

Table 1: Patients of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs) [1] for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority—England, as at 30 September 2002

Number (headcount)

	England	*Portsmouth City PCT*
All practitioners[2]	32,292	105
of which:		
UPEs	28,031	101
Patients of UPEs	51,522,391	181,805
Ratio UPEs to patients	1:1,838	1:1,800

[1] UPEs include GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs and PMS salaried GPs.

[2] All practitioners include GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, GP registrars, salaried doctors (para. 52 SPA), PMS other and GP retainers.

Source:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Table 2: Reported GP vacancies in England and Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA and PCTs, 2003

Headcount (number)

England total	[1]3,245
East Hampshire PCT	18
Fareham and Gosport PCT	10
Portsmouth City PCT	10

[1] One PCT (Sutton and Merton PCT, South West London SHA) did not respond to the survey.

Note:

No figures for PCTs are available before 2003 as previous years vacancy numbers were collected from health authorities.

Source:

Department of Health GP Recruitment, Retention and Vacancy survey 2003.

Health Care Professionals

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the net inflow of health care professionals to the United Kingdom was in each of the last ten years, broken down by *(a)* country and *(b)* profession. [151611]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council holds information on the number of initial admissions to the register by country. This information is available on the NMC's website at www.nmc-uk.org.

The Department of Health Medical and Dental Workforce Census provides a breakdown of all doctors in the national health service broken down by United Kingdom, European Economic Area (EEA) and non-EEA countries, and the full data has been placed in the Library.

Health Care Workers (Communicable Diseases)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether health care workers from overseas who are employed at NHS treatment centres are subject to compulsory tests for communicable diseases; and if he will make a statement. [151870]

Mr. Hutton: Health care workers from overseas who are employed at national health service treatment centres will be subject to the same occupational health checks for communicabie diseases as other NHS health care staff, in accordance with their duty of care to protect the health and safety of their patients. Under existing guidance, these will include checks for tuberculosis disease and for immunity to hepatitis B and chickenpox, with immunisation if appropriate.

Health Statistics

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* delayed transfers of care and *(b)* emergency readmissions within 28 days of discharge there were in each quarter of 2003–04, for (i) each NHS region, (ii) each strategic health authority, (iii) each NHS trust and (iv) England, broken down by (A) age and (B) in the case of the reason for delay. [152848]

Dr. Ladyman: The latest figures for 2003–04, Quarter 3 (December 2003) will be available by the middle of February, and will be placed in the Library. All the information for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, 2003–04 is available in the Library.

Health Workers (Commonwealth)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the United Kingdom will sign up to the code of practice for the international recruitment of health workers approved by the Commonwealth Health Ministers in May 2003. [150650]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The United Kingdom strongly supports the principles underlying the Commonwealth code of practice on the international recruitment of health workers. We do not intend, however, to sign up to the version put forward in May 2003. That version differed from earlier versions, which had been acceptable to us, and did not reflect amendments we had suggested.

The Department has its own guidance and a code of practice embodying ethical principles for the international recruitment of healthcare workers, which are clear, explicit, and under regular review. While we support efforts to persuade more countries and bodies to adopt ethical principles for any active international recruitment they undertake, we do not regard the Commonwealth code of practice as it stands as an appropriate vehicle.

Only 22 of the (then) 54 Commonwealth countries signed up to the Commonwealth code.

Local Health Economies

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the implications of the targets set by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's community plan for local health economies. [151630]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has recognised the need to consider the implications of Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Growth Area initiative for local health economies.

Work to assess the impact on health care need is ongoing and we are considering the appropriateness of providing extra funding for those areas affected.

Macular Degeneration

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average wait was between diagnosis of macular degeneration and first follow-up appointment with a health professional in the last period for which figures are available. [148934]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* Information on the average wait between diagnosis of macular degeneration and first follow-up appointment is not held centrally.

Information is available on the number of hospital admissions (first period of in-patient care) and average waiting times for those diagnosed with degeneration of the macular pole. In all, there were 3,417 admissions in England in 2002–03 for degeneration of the macular pole. The average waiting time for these admissions was 67 days.

Admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year. In-patients are defined as patients who are admitted to hospital and occupy a bed, including both admissions where an overnight stay is planned and day cases.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what support those suffering from age-related macular degeneration currently receive after diagnosis. [148935]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* In addition to any medical treatment that may be appropriate, people with vision problems affecting their quality of life can be referred for a low vision assessment. Low vision services are usually provided in a hospital setting, but in many parts of the country are being provided in locations closer to where people live, for example, in local opticians' practices and at centres for visually impaired people. It is important that the prescribing of any optical aids, and training in their use, must be done in the context of an individual's vision and the optical status of the eyes. Low vision aids, such as strong reading glasses, magnifiers or telescopes are available free on loan to any person requiring them.

Social services departments also have responsibility for assessing the needs of those who request help due to problems with their vision. Help could include aids to daily living, such as improved home lighting and hi-marks for cookers, or the provision of mobility training to enable a person to retain their independence with respect to travel.

Marshfield Road Surgery

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what basis the decision has been taken to close the Marshfield Road Surgery of Dr. Barne Williams, in Chippenham; and what procedure was used to make the decision. [151160]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* On 30 September 2002, the primary care trust (PCT) gave six months notice to terminate Dr. William's personal medical services contract (PMS) on grounds of

breach of contract, following Dr. William's continued refusal to provide out-of-hours services to his registered patients.

Dr. Williams invoked the national health service disputes resolution procedure, pursuant to Section 4 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990. Subsequently, an independent adjudicator was appointed pursuant to the NHS (Disputes Resolution) regulations 1996. On 17 December 2003, the independent adjudicator upheld the PCT decision that the PMS contract should terminate on 30 January 2004.

I am informed that Dr. Williams has now applied to rejoin the general medical services list and this is currently being considered by the Family Health Services Appeals Authority.

Medical Students

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the future impact on the NHS of the increase in the proportion of medical students who are female *(a)* in general practice and *(b)* in hospital medicine. [151698]

Mr. Hutton: The increasing proportion of women entering the medical profession and the impact of this on participation in the workforce is factored into the Department's workforce planning.

MMR Vaccine

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the refusal of parents to allow their children to receive the MMR vaccine affects *(a)* payment to the child's family doctor and *(b)* the star rating of the general practitioner surgery which the child attends. [151570]

Mr. Hutton: The MMR vaccine is provided to children as part of the childhood immunisation programme. General practitioners receive payment through a target system, which incentivises high levels of coverage in order to provide herd immunity. The target is achieved if they immunise an average of 70 per cent. or 90 per cent. of the children aged two or under on their patient list each quarter.

Target payment rates are:

£980 for the 70 per cent. target.

£2,940 for the 90 per cent. target.

The MMR indicator is one of 33 performance indicators in the primary care trust balance scorecard. Calculation of the ratings for 2003–04 is a matter for the new Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection.

There is no star rating system for GPs' surgeries.

NHS Budget (Non-British Citizens)

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the annual budget for the national health service in 2003–04 has been spent on treatment of non-British citizens. [150645]

Mr. Hutton: Entitlement to free national health service treatment is based on residence in the United Kingdom. The national health service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989 place a duty on NHS trusts to establish whether a patient is ordinarily resident or otherwise eligible for free NHS hospital treatment and, if not, to levy a charge for any treatment provided.

The amounts collected from NHS charged patients are not separately identified in trust accounts and are not collected centrally.

NHS Complaints Procedure

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the individuals and organisations from which his Department, its executive agencies and the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department are responsible received a response to the consultation, Reforming the NHS complaints procedure: a listening document. [149869]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library.

NHS Funding

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for each *(a)* NHS region, *(b)* health authority and *(c)* NHS trust for each quarter of 2002–03 the (i) monetary value of approvals to use (A) capital and (B) revenue for capital purposes, (ii) number of approvals and (iii) total capital allocation. [152509]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* The allocation of capital resources available for hospital and community health services for 2002–03 is contained in HSC 2001/027. This shows that £85.6 million was set aside for central budgets (to be distributed by the Department of Health); none was distributed directly to health authorities and the table below shows the allocations to regions for 2002–03.

£000

2002–03 regional capital planning totals	*General allocations*	*Renal services*	*Fallon Enquiry*	*Total*
Northern and Yorkshire	183,112	1,171	—	184,283
Trent	139,351	902	3,000	143,253
Eastern	140,142	898	—	141,040
London	279,262	1,442	3,000	283,704
South East	231,867	1,489	—	233,356
South West	132,332	841	—	133,173
West Midlands	157,661	1,010	—	158,671
North West	198,273	1,248	3,000	202,521
Total	1,462,000	9,000	9,000	1,480,000

The allocations for renal services and the Fallon Enquiry were earmarked for specific initiatives. The general allocations in column two contained an element for the Local Capital Modernisation Fund (£110 million) initiative but the remaining £1.352 billion was available to regional offices to fund block and discretionary capital projects at individual trusts. It was for regions to agree individual capital projects with their local trusts and distribute the funding accordingly. To gather this information would involve disproportionate cost.

Under Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts new serviced assets are paid for by annual payments from

revenue allocations. This is the use of revenue for capital purposes. The major PFI schemes which were approved (which signed contracts) during the financial year 2002–03 and for which records are held centrally on the unitary payment which becomes payable when the scheme is fully operational are listed in the table.

NHS trust	*Region*	*Date of approval*	*Unitary payment (£ million)*
Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust	South West	1 May 2002	21,267
University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust	West Midlands	27 November 2002	50,211

NHS Professionals

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether NHS Professionals is able to operate more efficiently than the previous arrangements for the recruitment of staff. [152012]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The benefits from the establishment of the NHS Professionals Special Health Authority will be achieved over time both in terms of reducing costs and in ensuring higher standards in the recruitment and development of temporary staff. National health service trusts across the country have already seen a reduction in temporary staffing costs and improvement in bank fill rates due to NHS Professionals. Local agency agreements have also saved an estimated £50 million over the last year.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the policy of NHS Professionals is on the international recruitment of nurses; how many nurses it has recruited from abroad in each year since its inception; and which countries these nurses came from. [152013]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The NHS Professionals Special Health Authority does not currently recruit nursing staff from abroad. Information is not available on the nationalities of the nurses recruited to date by NHS Professionals.

Nurses/Trainees and Midwives

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to commission research into the reasons why *(a)* nurses and *(b)* midwives trained in the UK (i) do not register with the Nurses and Midwifery Council and (ii) practise overseas; [151344]

(2) if he will commission research to establish the number of UK nurse trainees who do not register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council and their reasons. [151721]

Mr. Hutton: The Department have a continuing programme of research into workforce issues, which is reviewed on a regular basis. The Nursing Research Unit at King's College London has undertaken studies of the careers of the 1990–91 cohort of registered general nurses and the 1997–98 cohort of Project 2000 diplomates. Both studies provide information about practising overseas, the findings will be placed in the Library. The diplomate cohort provides information about registering with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

With regard to registering with the NMC, the study showed that the overwhelming majority of newly qualified or about to qualify nurses and midwives had registered or were about to register with the NMC. With regard to practising overseas, while many nurses and midwives expressed an interest in working abroad while in training, of these who intended to work overseas, under 2 per cent., actually went on to work abroad once they started nursing.

Nurses have always used their qualifications to work overseas. The United Kingdom is a net importer of nurses and midwives and there are more qualified nurses working in the national health service than ever before. Between September 1997 and March 2003 there has been an increase of over 55,000 nurses working in the NHS. This shows that our recruitment and retention policies are working and suggests that overseas nurses consider the UK to be a good place to work.

Nursing Students (Tuition Fees)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of meeting tuition fees for nursing students arising from the Higher Education Bill. [152334]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* Existing contracts between strategic health authorities and higher education institutions for nursing, midwifery and allied health professional training, cover the full cost of that training, including tuition. The consultation document, "Funding Learning and Development for the Healthcare Workforce", sets out our proposal for a national model contract. It is intended that this contract for national health service-funded pre-registration courses, to be introduced from 1 April 2004, will continue to cover the full cost of training and will specifically prohibit the charging of variable fees to NHS students arising from the Higher Education Bill. There will, therefore, be no additional cost to the NHS for meeting tuition fees arising from the Higher Education Bill.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs) of the funding announced in his Department's press release of 18 September; and what guidance he will issue to PCTs on how their allocations on local dental services are to be spent. [145178]

Ms Rosie Winterton: On 18 September 2003, we announced new investment totalling £65.2 million for dentistry. This consisted of £35 million capital for dental access and quality, £30 million for dental information technology (IT) and £200,000 for developing dental leadership. This was on top of revenue funding we announced in August of £9 million for targeted support on dental access and £1 million for organisation development. We subsequently announced on

25 November 2003 further revenue funding of £15 million to support access for patients to a modernised national health service dental service, bringing the total of new funding announced this year for dentistry to £90.2 million.

The £30 million investment in IT will facilitate integration of dental practices with wider NHS (IT) systems and will support local contracting. The IT investment and solutions for dentistry consistent with other NHS information technology initiatives are being taken forward within the national programme for IT.

The funding of £200,000 for developing dental leadership is aimed at strategic health authority level to support primary care trusts (PCTs) in delivering the modernisation agenda for dentistry.

The organisational development funds of £1 million are being distributed in line with advice from strategic health authorities (SHAs). They are intended to help PCTs, local dental committees and dentists to prepare for the change in the way dental services are commissioned. £0.3 million has been distributed for 2003–04 and the remaining £0.7 million will be distributed for use in 2004–05.

The balance of £59 million is intended to support dental access and quality as follows:

£9 million is for the NHS dentistry support team that has been set up to work with those areas where it is hardest to find an NHS dentist. These funds are being used in a targeted way to support local action plans for improving access to dentistry. The NHS support team have identified 16 PCTs with specific dental access issues. Funding for these PCTs, which are shown in the following list, will take into account the challenge faced by the individual PCTs and the potential benefit of the proposals in the dental action plan that each of the challenged PCTs is developing. Draft plans are now starting to arrive. The team allocated £200,000 in 2003–04, and will be increasing the pace of allocations early in 2004–05 based on the plans currently in preparation;

£35 million capital funds are to enable PCTs to invest in primary care premises and facilities to improve access and quality. These funds will be distributed on a fair-shares basis at SHA level and then on a targeted basis to PCTs on the advice of the SHAs. The fair shares for SHAs are set out in the table. The bulk of the funds will be spent in 2004–05 to allow SHAs and PCTs to plan for its investment; and

£15 million revenue funding for 2004–05 to support access will also be allocated on a fair-shares basis at SHA level and, on the advice of the SHA, on a targeted basis to PCTs. The SHA fair shares allocations of these funds are set out in the table.

Guidance for PCTs on commissioning NHS dentistry, including the allocation of £35 million capital and £15 million revenue to support access, quality and choice was issued on 15 January 2004. The guidance makes it clear that access remains a key priority in the run-up to the new arrangements for dentistry from April 2005.

PCTs which have been identified for support from the NHS Dentistry Support Team:

Fareham and Gosport;
Isle of Wight;
New Forest;
West Gloucestershire;
North East Lincolnshire;
Scarborough, Whitby and Rydedale;
Craven, Harrogate and Rural District;
Northumbria Care Trust;
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale;
Hyndeburn and Ribble;
Blackburn with Darwen;
Morecambe Bay;
Shropshire County;
Telford and Wrekin;
South West Staffordshire; and
Central Cheshire.

£000

Strategic Health Authority	*Capital*	*Revenue*
England	35,000	15,000
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	1,396	598
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	1,039	446
Birmingham and The Black Country	1,771	761
Cheshire and Merseyside	1,853	796
County Durham and Tees Valley	894	384
Cumbria and Lancashire	1,411	602
Dorset and Somerset	814	349
Essex	1,071	458
Greater Manchester	1,987	852
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	1,148	492
Kent and Medway	1,071	459
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	962	412
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	1,416	607
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	1,073	460
North Central London	961	413
North East London	1,297	556
North West London	1,344	575
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	1,089	466
Shropshire and Staffordshire	988	425
South East London	1,165	499
South West London	863	370
South West Peninsula	1,092	469
South Yorkshire	981	420
Surrey and Sussex	1,689	723
Thames Valley	1,285	550
Trent	1,813	777
West Midlands South	1,013	433
West Yorkshire	1,514	648

Radiographers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacancies exist for radiographers in the NHS in *(a)* Portsmouth and South East Hampshire and *(b)* England; and what assessment he has made of progress towards improving recruitment. [152350]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the number and rate of three month vacancies for radiographers in each year since 2001 is shown in the following tables.

The Government are implementing a range of measures to recruit more health care professionals and have made considerable progress in increasing the number of radiographers employed in the national health service and the number of training places for radiographers. There are 11 per cent. more NHS radiographers than in 1997 and the number of students entering training to become a radiographer has more than doubled since 1996–97.

Department of Health Vacancies Survey: Vacancies in NHS Trusts by HA area and SHA area for qualified radiography staff

Three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

	March 2001		September 2000	
	Three month vacancy rate (Percentage)	*Three month vacancy (Number)*	*Staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
Diagnostic				
England (excluding HA staff)	4.4	420	9,165	11,032
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire HA	0.0	0	78	110
Isle of Wight HA	15.9	4	19	26
Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Therapeutic				
England (excluding HA staff)	8.0	114	1,309	1,453
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire HA	6.5	2	29	33
Isle of Wight HA	*	0	0	0
Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

	March 2002		September 2001	
	Three month vacancy rate (Percentage)	*Three month vacancy (Number)*	*Staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
Diagnostic				
England (excluding HA staff)	5.5	531	9,260	11,158
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire HA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Isle of Wight HA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	7.9	23	270	340
Therapeutic				
England (excluding HA staff)	8.8	134	1,391	1,543
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire HA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Isle of Wight HA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	0.0	0	55	62

Three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

	March 2003		September 2002	
	Three month vacancy rate (Percentage)	*Three month vacancy (Number)*	*Staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
Diagnostic				
England (excluding HA staff)	6.1	599	9,489	11,489
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire HA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Isle of Wight HA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	6.5	22	283	364
Therapeutic				
England (excluding HA staff)	10.7	169	1,374	1,542
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire HA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Isle of Wight HA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	5.7	4	56	65

Three month vacancy notes:

1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March.
2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which Trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole-time equivalents).
3. Three month Vacancy Rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. For 2002 and 2003 three month Vacancy Rates are calculated using staff in post from the Vacancy Survey. Earlier years vacancy rates are calculated using staff in post from the Non-Medical Workforce Census the previous September.
5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.
6. n/a = not applicable.

7 * = Vacancies plus staff in post is less than 10.

Staff in post notes:

Staff in post data is from the Non-Medical Workforce Census, September each specified year.

General notes:

1. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates.
3. Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts.
4. Strategic HA figures are based on Trusts, and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of health care.

Sources:

Department of Health Vacancies Survey, March each specified year.
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census, September each specified year.

Rainbows Children's Hospice (Leicestershire)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has had from hon. Members concerning the funding of Rainbows Children's Hospice. [151664]

Dr. Ladyman: Ministers have replied to a small number of Parliamentary Questions and letters from hon. Members. In addition, the former Secretary of State met with the Chief Executive of the Rainbows Children's Hospice in April 2003.

Respite Care

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money Leicestershire West Primary Care Trust gave to projects dealing with children's respite care in 2003. [151666]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally. The New Opportunities Fund has provided £48 million over three years in support of palliative care projects for children, of which children's hospices have received £15 million.

The Rainbows Children's Hospice Loughborough has received £650,000 from the New Opportunities Fund.

Sensory Impairment

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by his Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since 1995–96; what his estimate is for 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [149725]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* The following table shows the expenditure on major information campaigns and advertising commissioned by the Department's communications directorate for the financial years 1995–96 to 2003–04 (estimated). The figures include the costs of campaign-related publishing, TV, radio, poster, newspaper and magazine advertising.

£ million

Financial year	*Total campaign expenditure*	*Advertising expenditure*
1995–96	15.56	2.08
1996–97	15.13	2.50
1997–98	6.63	2.04
1998–99	22.96	8.53
1999–2000	35.97	15.17
2000–01	25.32	20.80
2001–02	37.23	20.41
2002–03	34.85	23.13
2003–04[1]	52.5	38.98

[1] Estimated

The differences between 2002–03 actual and 2003–04 forecast figures is the result of the Government's commitment to increasing tobacco control advertising. The SR2002 settlement allocated £39 million per annum for three years to tobacco control advertising. Expenditure for the Department's agencies and non-departmental public bodies can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Streptococcal Infections

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he is taking to implement the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Green Top Guidelines on Group B streptococcus. [151946]

Dr. Ladyman: The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' guidelines on the Prevention of Early Onset Neonatal Group B Streptococcus Disease have been circulated to all fellows and members of the College. Ministers have asked the UK National Screening Committee (NSC) to undertake further work to assess the existing evidence on screening and treatment for Group B Streptococcus in pregnancy in the UK. A recent workshop agreed a number of actions to reduce the risk of GBS infection, including ensuring better information for professionals and pregnant women, more consistent and appropriate advice and treatment for women at increased risk, and further research. The NSC will take forward a programme of work in the light of this report during 2004.

NHS Staff

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses and *(b)* general practitioners are in training in *(a)* South Tyneside, *(b)* Tyne and Wear, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK; and what the figures were in 1997. [152102]

Mr. Hutton: The number (headcount) of general practitioner registrars in South Tyneside Primary Care Trust (PCT), Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authorities and England since 1997 is shown in table 1.

The number (whole time equivalent) of pre-registration nurses in training in Northern England Workforce Development Confederation (WDC), County Durham and Tees Valley WDC and England in each year since 1998–99, the first year the information is available, is shown in table 2. Information is not available at South Tyneside PCT level.

Information for GP registrars and nurses in training in Scotland and Wales are the responsibility of the devolved Administrations. While the institutions in Northern Ireland are dissolved, responsibility rests with Ministers in the Northern Ireland Office.

1. GP registrars in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA and Co. Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority

Number (headcount)

	1997	*2001*	*2002*	*June 2003*
England	1,343	1,883	1,980	2,157
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	25	55	73	78
of which:				
South Tyneside PCT	3	3	4	
County Durham and Tees Valley	28	34	37	51

Note:
Data as at 1 October 1997, 30 September 2001–02 and 30 June 2003.

Source:
Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

2. Number of students in pre-registration nursing and midwifery training between 1998–99 and 2002–03

Number (whole time equivalent)

	England	Northern England WDC	County Durham and Tees Valley WDC
1998–99	39,319	1,278	695
1999–2000	44,005	1,728	752
2000–01	48,422	1,400	827
2001–02	53,299	1,883	1,032
2002–03	58,902	1,672	1,154

Note:
There have been boundary changes since 1998–99, data are not, therefore, directly comparable.
Source:
Financial and Workforce Information Return.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting times were for *(a)* all specialities, *(b)* orthopaedics and *(c)* thoracic treatment in each year since 1997 for (i) England and (ii) each region; and if he will make a statement. [149854]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the *(a)* mean and *(b)* median waiting time for (i) in-patient and (ii) first out-patient appointments for each quarter from 1990–91 to Q1 2004; and if he will make a statement. [150539]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 28 January 2004]*: The tables show estimates of the mean and median waiting times for in-patients and out-patients. Out-patient data are only available from Quarter 3, 1993–94.

Patients waiting for elective in-patient admission: England

	Average waiting time (months)	
Quarter ending	Mean	Median
30 June 1990	8.55	4.77
30 September 1990	8.41	4.76
31 December 1990	7.95	4.50
31 March 1991	7.57	4.43
30 June 1991	7.53	4.37
30 September 1991	7.31	4.19
31 December 1991	6.43	3.75
31 March 1992	5.12	3.20
30 June 1992	5.03	3.45
30 September 1992	4.96	3.40
31 December 1992	4.77	3.24
31 March 1993	4.53	3.18
30 June 1993	4.72	3.47
30 September 1993	4.80	3.45
31 December 1993	4.80	3.41
31 March 1994	4.61	3.23
30 June 1994	4.64	3.35
30 September 1994	4.59	3.25
31 December 1994	4.42	3.02
31 March 1995	4.02	2.84
30 June 1995	4.08	2.95
30 September 1995	4.01	2.86
31 December 1995	3.87	2.79
31 March 1996	3.66	2.72
30 June 1996	3.81	2.84
30 September 1996	3.89	2.82
31 December 1996	3.99	2.87
31 March 1997	4.17	3.04
30 June 1997	4.34	3.09

Patients waiting for elective in-patient admission: England

	Average waiting time (months)	
Quarter ending	Mean	Median
30 September 1997	4.49	3.27
31 December 1997	4.60	3.36
31 March 1998	4.61	3.42
30 June 1998	4.67	3.50
30 September 1998	4.53	3.25
31 December 1998	4.39	3.03
31 March 1999	4.30	2.96
30 June 1999	4.28	2.95
30 September 1999	4.30	2.95
31 December 1999	4.30	2.94
31 March 2000	4.31	2.97
30 June 2000	4.37	3.08
30 September 2000	4.36	3.00
31 December 2000	4.32	2.96
31 March 2001	4.18	2.90
30 June 2001	4.35	3.16
30 September 2001	4.35	3.09
31 December 2001	4.15	2.94
31 March 2002	4.01	2.92
30 June2002	4.07	3.04
30 September 2002	4.02	2.96
31December 2002	3.89	2.87
31 March 2003	3.61	2.75
30 June 2003	3.62	2.80
30 September 2003	3.53	2.71

Source:
Department of Health form KH07

Waiting times for 1st consultant out-patient appointment following G(D)P referral: England

	Average waiting time (weeks)	
Quarter	Mean	Median
Q1 1993–94	9.37	5.47
Q2 1993–94	9.35	5.42
Q1 1994–95	8.90	5.69
Q2 1994–95	8.91	5.82
Q3 1994–95	9.06	5.72
Q4 1994–95	9.33	6.05
Q1 1995–96	8.60	6.01
Q2 1995–96	8.85	6.31
Q3 1995–96	8.76	6.07
Q4 1995–96	8.68	6.02
Q1 1996–97	8.48	6.13
Q2 1996–97	8.46	6.18
Q3 1996–97	8.64	6.05
Q4 1996–97	8.70	6.05
Q1 1997–98	8.71	6.17
Q2 1997–98	8.86	6.37
Q3 1997–98	9.13	6.25
Q4 1997–98	9.32	6.27
Q1 1998–99	9.30	6.49
Q2 1998–99	9.63	6.80
Q3 1998–99	10 06	6.89
Q4 1998–99	10.42	6.99
Q1 1999–2000	10.46	7.09
Q2 1999–2000	10.73	7.31
Q3 1999–2000	11.08	7.32
Q4 1999–2000	11.49	7.58
Q1 2000–01	10.49	7.1 1
Q2 2000–01	10.76	7.45
Q3 2000–01	10.90	7.38
Q4 2000–01	10.81	7.38
Q1 2001–02	9.72	6.89
Q2 2001–02	10.10	7.21
Q3 2001–02	10.49	7.27
Q4 2001–02	11.06	7.58
Q1 2002–03	8.93	7.03
Q2 2002–03	8.97	7.15
Q3 2002–03	8.98	7.22

Waiting times for 1st consultant: out-patient appointment following G(D)P referral: England

Quarter	Average waiting time (weeks)	
	Mean	Median
Q4 2002–03	8.99	7.34
Q1 2003–04	8.25	6.86
Q2 2003–04	8.52	7.05

Note:

The figures shown are estimates based on aggregate data, categorised into waiting time bands, and do not reflect shifts in the waiting time profiles within these bands, only between bands. The median is not very sensitive to reductions in maximum waiting times, and it is possible to see a rise in the median, while reducing maximum waiting times because of shifts in low time bands. Short-term progress on delivering maximum waiting times (including in-year tail-gunning) will not necessarily translate into a reduction in the median waiting time. Our policy, therefore, is to focus attention on the number of patients waiting the longest, and in each waiting time band.

Year-on-year, the trend on both waiting lists and waiting times is clearly downwards. Waiting lists are now over 199,000 lower than March 1997, and numbers of patients waiting over 3 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months and 15 months for in-patient treatment are all lower than inherited March 1997 figures.

Source:

Department of Health form QM08

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital trolley waits there were in the London region in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002 and *(d)* 2003; and how many there were in December of each year. [149794]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the number of emergency admissions through accident and emergency departments and the time spent waiting for admission to a ward is published each quarter at www.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity. This information is available in the Library. Information is not available on a monthly basis.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Anti-social Behaviour

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what advice he has given to *(a)* police and *(b)* local councils on (i) the need to liaise with each other, (ii) the protocols for publishing intentions in the local press and (iii) operational protocols in respect of anti-social behaviour legislation; [152427]

(2) what guidance he has issued to *(a)* local councils and *(b)* the police on the use of anti-social behaviour legislation to disperse groups of youths. [152428]

Ms Blears: We have issued a "Together Campaign Pack" which provides information and tools for local authorities, police and other practitioners to run campaigns against anti-social behaviour in their area. It encourages practitioners to keep the public and partner organisations informed and involved in the work they are doing to tackle anti-social behaviour.

We have also issued Home Office Circular number 04/2004 describing the powers to disperse groups contained in Part 4 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. The circular provides information to assist the police and local authorities in the use of the new powers. The National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) has been asked to produce further guidance on these new powers. We hope to publish the guidance later this year.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a code of practice for police operations in respect of recent anti-social behaviour legislation. [153077]

Ms Blears: We have published "A Guide to the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003", copies of which were sent to all Chief Constables in England and Wales and Members of Parliament. In addition, we have produced some detailed guidance on the measures in the Act for practitioners, including the police. Examples of these include:

Notes of Guidance to Accompany Part One of the Act, 'The Power to Close Premises' where drugs are used unlawfully.

Home Office Circular 04/2004 on the use of the powers to disperse groups contained in Part 4 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Home Office Circular 01/2004 on the purpose and effect of the firearms provisions contained in Part 5 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Information on when further guidance will be issued on other measures in the Act is contained in the Guide to the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Asylum Policy

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the differences between the proposed new measures on asylum policy and the present immigration rules. [150178]

Beverley Hughes: The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill and accompanying explanatory notes set out the proposed changes to existing legislation and the effect of these changes. The Immigration Rules can be accessed through the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) website.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Coleman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what instructions were given to his Department's staff on the length of time of stay that asylum seekers were allowed in the UK before applying for asylum before section 55 of the Nationality, Asylum and Immigration Act 2001 was enforced; from when those instructions applied; and what the current instructions are; and from what date they applied; [146972]

(2) when he will publish revised National Asylum Support Service Policy Bulletin 75 on the application of section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002; [151409]

(3) if he will publish the revised casework notes on the application of section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, issued to the National Asylum Support Service caseworkers after 17 December 2003. [151418]

Beverley Hughes: Instructions on the operation of Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 first appeared in Policy Bulletin 75, published on 7 January 2003. Revised instructions appear in Policy Bulletin 75 version 3, published 11 April 2003.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced on 17 December 2003 that asylum applicants who could give a credible explanation of the way in which they arrived in the UK and who had made a claim for asylum within three days of arrival would be considered to have applied as soon as reasonably practicable.

In view of the interest in the operation of section 55, a new revised edition of Policy Bulletin 75 which will include guidance to National Asylum Support Service caseworkers, will be published in February.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further research has been conducted since July 2002 on why asylum seekers seek asylum in Britain rather than elsewhere; on what size of sample such research was based; and from which countries the participants originated. [148041]

Beverley Hughes: Since the publication of the Home Office report "Understanding the decision-making of asylum seekers" (Home Office Research Series 243/Findings 172) in July 2002, there has been no further research undertaken by the Home Office which focuses specifically on why asylum seekers choose to come to the United Kingdom in preference to other possible destinations.

The Immigration and Nationality Directorate carries out analysis of asylum statistics and findings from other studies to assess likely trends in asylum intake figures.

The Research Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office is in the process of agreeing its 2004–05 research programme. It is likely that further investigations into the decision-making of asylum applicants and other migrants will form a part of this programme.

Siobhain McDonagh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applicants who are citizens of Sri Lanka were given permission to stay in the UK in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002 and *(d)* 2003; and how many applications were refused in

each of these years. [148422]

Beverley Hughes *[pursuant to his answer, 21 January 2004, Official Report, c. 1269W]:* Due to an administrative error the figures for Sri Lanka were not the most current figures available. The corrected version of the answer is in the table.

The table shows the available data, for outcomes of initial decisions relating to asylum applications (principal applicants) for nationals of Sri Lanka in 2000, 2001, 2002 and from January to September 2003. Grants of exceptional leave to remain and of discretionary leave may be followed by review of individuals' cases and do not necessarily result in permanent settlement.

Initial decisions on asylum applications[1,2] received in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, by year, nationals of Sri Lanka

Principal applicants

	Decisions							
Sri Lanka	*Total decisions*	*Grants of asylum*	*Grants of Exceptional Leave to Remain*	*Grants of Humanitarian Protection*	*Grants of Discretionary Leave*	*Total refusals[3]*	*Grants of Exceptional Leave to Remain under backlog criteria[4,5]*	*Non compliance refusals under backlog criteria[4,6]*
2000	9,050	900	285	n/a	n/a	6,875	895	100
2001[7]	10,350	1,440	540	n/a	n/a	8,370	n/a	n/a
2002[8]	4,285	340	275	n/a	n/a	3,670	n/a	n/a
January to September 2003[8]	1,265	20	55	—	35	1,155	n/a	n/a

n/a = not applicable

[1] Provisional figures rounded to nearest 5.

[2] Information is of initial determination decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.

[3] May include some refusals under non compliance grounds.

[4] Cases decided under pragmatic measures aimed at reducing the pre 1996 asylum backlog.

[5] May include a small number of cases where asylum has been granted.

[6] May include a small number of cases where the application has been refused on substantive grounds.

[7] Revised figures

[8] Provisional figures.

The table shows the available data, for outcomes of appeals relating to refused asylum applications (principal applicants) for nationals of Sri Lanka in 2000, 2001, 2002 and from January to September 2003. Allowed appeals may result in grants of asylum, grants of humanitarian protection or grants of discretionary leave, or in appeals to the IAT by the Secretary of State, and do not necessarily result in permanent settlement.

Outcome of Appeals[1,2] determined by adjudicators of the Immigration Appellate Authority, excluding dependants, nationals of Sri Lanka, 2001 to September 2003

Number of principal appellants

	Appeals determined by adjudicators[2]						
		Allowed		*Dismissed*		*Withdrawn*	
	Total	*Total*	*As percentage of Determined*	*Total*	*As percentage of Determined*	*Total*	*As percentage of Determined*
2001	4,830	1,810	37	2,900	60	120	2
2002	6,435	1,455	23	4,880	76	100	2
January to September 2003	4,710	580	12	4,015	85	110	2

[1] Provisional figures rounded to nearest 5 (except percentages) with '*' = 1 or 2. Figures may not add up due to independent rounding.

[2] Figures include cases withdrawn by the Home Office, as well as the appellant.

Information on asylum applications and decisions is published quarterly. The next publication will be available on the 24 February 2004 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Burglaries

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for burglary were of first-time burglars in each of the last five years, broken down by *(a)* police authority and *(b)* age; and how many of these were given a custodial sentence in each year. [150788]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not available. However Criminal Statistics, England and Wales 1998 (Cm. 4649) and Criminal Statistics, England and Wales 2000 (Cm. 5312), both deposited in the Library, contain estimates of the percentage of male burglars sentenced in 1998 and 2000 who had no previous convictions for a standard list offence. The estimated percentages were 25 per cent. and 31 per cent. respectively for 1998 and 2000.

Cannabis

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of prosecutions brought for cannabis-related offences have not resulted in a conviction in each of the last five years. [151506]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is contained in the table.

Proportion of persons[1] proceeded against for cannabis related offences[2] who were not convicted

	Percentage
1998	9
1999	10
2000	8
2001	10
2002	10

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Offences include supplying or offering to supply, possession with intent to supply, production, possession and permitting premises to be used for unlawful purpose (cannabis).

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what references will be made in his new campaign on drugs education to accompany the reclassification of cannabis on possible links with mental illness. [151291]

Caroline Flint: A £1 million information campaign started on 22 January to inform the public about the changes to the law on cannabis. This includes radio and newspaper adverts, leaflets, posters, postcards and education packs for schools. All these communications are designed to provide the simple message that cannabis is harmful and remains illegal.

Further activity is planned to communicate specific messages about the health risks associated with cannabis, which are evidence based and rigorously market tested. This will include mental health issues.

Drugs

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of people in England and Wales who take *(a)* heroin, *(b)* marijuana, *(c)* cocaine and *(d)* ecstasy. [150761]

Caroline Flint: The British Crime Survey (BCS) provides figures on use among adults aged 16 to 59 years of age in England and Wales. The 2002–03 BCS estimated that approximately 3.4 million adults had used marijuana, 640,000 had used cocaine and 610,000 had used ecstasy and 45,000 had used heroin in the previous 12 months.

Approximately one million people were estimated to have used class A drugs during the last year.

Estimated levels of drug use for those aged 16 to 59 years have remained the same since 2001–02.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the system of classifying illegal drugs. [152345]

Caroline Flint: The Government have no plans to review the system used to classify illegal drugs.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) is a statutory and non-executive non-departmental public body, established by the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) 1971. It has a statutory duty to keep under review the situation in the United Kingdom with respect to the misuse of drugs and to advise Ministers of the measures which they consider should to be taken to deal with social problems which arise from drug misuse. Ministers may also ask the ACMD to consider the appropriate classification and scheduling of any substance. In addition, the ACMD has a duty to consider any matter relating to drug dependence or misuse that may be referred to them by Ministers.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices were issued in the most recent period for which figures are available, broken down by police authority in England and Wales; what the total value of these penalty notices was; what proportion of these were paid in full and on time; and what proportion of those fined paid their penalty in full and on time. [152189]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* Information on fixed penalty notices issued for road traffic offences by police force area can be found in the annual Home Office publication 'Offences relating to motor vehicles, England and Wales Supplementary tables'—Tables 20(a) to 20(c) refers. The latest issue covers 2001. Copies are available from the Library. The total value of fixed penalty notices issued is not collected centrally.

Data are also collected centrally on the disposal, (i.e. paid, fine registration certificate issued etc) of fixed penalty notices issued for road traffic offences. However because of the time taken for the procedures for payment to be enforced the data are collected approximately nine months later than the period of issue. Tables 21(a) and 21(b) of the above 2001 publication detail 2000 data by number and percentage of fixed penalty notices by result. Tables 20(a) to 20(c) of the 2000 publication cover that period. Information is not available on the number of fines paid in full and on time.

Over 6,000 penalty notices for disorder were issued in the year-long pilots in four police force areas which started in mid-2002. A Home Office Research Findings covering the evaluation of the pilots will be published shortly.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of totting procedures for motoring offences. [151940]

Caroline Flint: The penalty points system acts as a reminder to drivers that they risk losing their licences if they persist in offending and plays an important part in our overall enforcement strategy. For the majority of drivers, the threat of disqualification through accumulating the appropriate number of penalty points acts to encourage compliance with the law.

Operation Tarian

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* raids, *(b)* arrests, *(c)* convictions and *(d)* drug seizures were carried out under Operation Tarian. [151731]

Caroline Flint: The Regional Task Force of Operation Tarian has executed 72 warrants, and made 82 arrests. At present no convictions have arisen as cases are

awaiting trial. It has seized 1.3 kg of cocaine, 0.491 kg of heroin, 8 kg of amphetamines, 15,738 tablets of ecstasy and 301,600 kg of cannabis, with a total estimated value of £1.6 million.

In addition it has seized £123,500 cash, placed restraining orders on property to the value of £1 million, dismantled six organised crime groups and disrupted 14 others.

Murders (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many murders there were in Southend in each of the last 10 years; and how many resulted in convictions. [152000]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* Published information on homicide relates to England and Wales only. The latest available is given in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 01/04, 'Crime in England and Wales 2002/2003: Supplementary Volume 1: Homicide and Gun Crime', a copy of which should be available from the Library or internet site http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html.

Police (Cumbria)

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons he proposes to reduce the amount of police specific grant to be received in Cumbria in 2004–05 in respect of the Rural Policing Initiative. [151875]

Ms Blears: Force allocations for the 31 forces benefiting from the £30 million Rural Policing Fund are determined by sparsity and population factors alone. I have made no changes to the formulae underpinning the Fund for next year. Cumbria's share will reduce by £7,000 (0.5 per cent.) to take account of changes in data relative to other authorities. Cumbria's allocation for 2004–05 is £1,348,383.

Police Statistics (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* recorded burglaries, *(b)* recorded thefts from or of a vehicle, *(c)* recorded violent crimes, *(d)* recorded crimes involving the use of firearms, *(e)* recorded drug offences and *(f)* crimes there were in Wales, broken down by (i) police force, (ii) constituency and (iii) local authority area for each year since 1997; [151734]

(2) if he will list the crime clear-up rate in Wales, broken down by *(a)* police force, *(b)* constituency and *(c)* local authority area for each year since 1997. [151736]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the tables.

Recorded crime statistics are not broken down by constituency areas. However, they are available at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) level. CDRPs were set up under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, with data available from 1999–2000. CDRPs broadly equate to local authority areas and include representatives from police, health, probation and other local agencies and provide strategies for reducing crime in the area. Recorded crime figures are available at CDRP level for six key offences only: violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, burglary in a dwelling, theft of a motor vehicle, and theft from a vehicle.

There was a change of counting rules for recorded crime on 1 April 1998, which had the effect of increasing the number of crimes counted. Numbers of offences for years before and after this date are therefore not directly comparable.

The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced across England and Wales in April 2002. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not comparable with previous years. Total detection rates (percentages) in Wales, for 1997 to 2002–03, are given in the table.

Percentage

Force	*1997*	*1998–99*[1]	*1999–2000*[2]	*2000–01*	*2001–02*[3]	*2002–03*[3]
Dyfed Powys	61	69	65	63	64	68
Gwent	51	55	53	57	55	48
North Wales	34	43	36	31	28	29
South Wales	36	39	31	32	33	29
Wales total	41	46	40	41	39	36

[1] Percentage detected using the expanded coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.
[2] Revised Home Office instructions, which clarified the recording of detections, were introduced on 1 April 1999. These instructions provided more precise and rigorous criteria for securing a detection, with the underlying emphasis on the successful result of a police investigation. As a result of the revised detections guidance (in which some previous methods of detection were no longer counted), the numbers of crimes detected, and figures derived from them, will have been affected.
[3] Detection figures may also have been affected by the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), with the exception of Gwent in 2001–02.

Overall detection rates are not available for CDRP areas.

Table 1

Offence	*1997*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Crime recorded by the police in Wales[1,2,5]						
All burglary	46,445	41,941	36,764	32,883	32,248	36,848
Theft of and from vehicles	59,785	56,161	51,864	43,652	42,662	48,879
Violent crime[3]	20,071	34,770	40,580	40,822	39,274	56,561
Firearms offences	594	591	712	614	[6]106	[6]161
Drug offences[4]	1,526	9,749	8,520	8,351	9,425	10,268
All crime	236,936	261,994	255,487	238,449	241,765	294,846

Table 1

Offence	*1997*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Crime recorded by the police in Dyfed Powys[1,2,5]						
All burglary	2,590	2,615	2,072	1,978	2,122	2,104
Theft of and from vehicles	2,372	2,480	2,203	2,120	2,052	2,028
Violent crime[3]	2,503	5,039	5,839	5,751	5,844	6,531
Firearms offences	61	60	45	68	[6]26	[6]17
Drug offences[4]	374	2,483	2,030	1,690	2,407	2,978
All crime	18,098	24,588	23,709	22,878	24,003	25,104
Crime recorded by the police in Gwent[1,2,5]						
All burglary	9,154	8,416	7,656	6,905	6,172	7,586
Theft of and from vehicles	9,649	9,746	9,107	8,109	7,019	8,332
Violent crime[3]	6,139	11,980	14,493	14,682	9,837	15,835
Firearms offences	129	215	248	197	[6]18	[6]52
Drug offences[4]	389	2,447	2,214	2,196	1,729	1,585
All crime	47,268	58,738	60,132	56,728	46,938	61,237
Crime recorded by the police in North Wales[1,2,5]						
All burglary	7,554	7,226	6,892	7,246	7,405	8,543
Theft of and from vehicles	7,911	7,254	7,501	7,186	7,710	8,096
Violent crime[3]	3,167	5,164	6,258	5,927	8,049	12,268
Firearms offences	109	94	104	74	[6]6	[6]18
Drug offences[4]	238	1,885	1,586	1,427	1,382	1,833
All crime	40,684	43,848	44,606	47,712	54,116	65,133
Crime recorded by the police in South Wales[1,2,5]						
All burglary	27,147	23,684	20,144	16,754	16,549	18,615
Theft of and from vehicles	39,853	36,681	33,053	26,237	25,881	30,423
Violent crime[3]	8,262	12,587	13,990	14,262	15,544	21,927
Firearms offences	295	222	315	275	[6]56	[6]74
Drug offences[4]	525	2,934	2,690	3,038	3,907	3,872
All crime	130,886	134,820	127,040	111,131	116,708	143,372

[1] Crimes were recorded on a calendar year basis until 1997, and on a financial year basis thereafter.

[2] The number of crimes recorded in that financial year using the expanded offence coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998. These changes had the general effect of increasing the number of crimes counted. Therefore, numbers of recorded crimes for this year are not directly comparable with previous years.

[3] Violent crime comprises offences of violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.

[4] Up to 1997, the only drug offence recorded was 'Trafficking in controlled drugs'. From 1998–99, the offences of 'Possession of controlled drugs' and 'Other drug offences', were added to the series.

[5] Three of the Wales forces implemented the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) prior to the official introduction on 1 April 2002; North Wales in October 2001, and both Dyfed Powys and South Wales in January 2002. Gwent introduced the Standard in April 2002. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police, with violent crime in particular being affected. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not comparable with previous years.

[6] The figures given for 2001–02 and 2002–03 are based on numbers of firearms offences recorded which exclude air weapons. The previous years figures include air weapons offences. Therefore, the figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 are not comparable with previous years figures.

Table 2: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in Wales from April 1999 to March 2003: numbers recorded for six key offences

	Violence against the person				*Sexual offences*			
CDRP	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Dyfed-Powys								
Carmarthenshire	2,275	2,243	2,455	2,523	115	108	130	100
Ceredigion	783	719	723	938	45	56	29	58
Pembroke	1,201	1,245	1,162	1,340	69	87	79	51
Powys	1,260	1,217	1,177	1,416	63	53	54	65
Gwent								
Blaenau Gwent	1,986	2,237	1,672	2,751	96	59	72	62
Caerphilly	4,779	4,959	2,680	4,494	142	153	121	152
Monmouthshire	1,749	1,593	982	1,455	54	64	45	58
Newport	3,459	3,217	2,482	4,248	142	105	117	147
Torfaen	1,801	2,192	1,369	2,072	69	59	82	67

Table 2: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in Wales from April 1999 to March 2003: numbers recorded for six key offences

	Violence against the person				*Sexual offences*			
CDRP	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
North Wales								
Conwy	954	806	1,072	1,872	52	43	59	98
Denbighshire	913	985	1,249	2,232	53	56	70	123
Flintshire	1,200	1,047	1,602	2,106	73	83	96	98
Gwynedd	781	784	1,223	1,738	63	59	65	94
Isle of Anglesey	562	505	656	1,085	46	28	70	41
Wrexham	1,329	1,231	1,541	2,439	86	133	104	101
South Wales								
Bridgend	1,419	1,363	1,468	2,003	54	59	47	91
Cardiff	3,983	4,236	4,331	6,175	220	151	183	200
Merthyr Tydfil	593	676	768	1,106	23	27	30	34
Neath Port Talbot	1,199	1,201	1,373	2,082	38	44	37	75
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	1,822	1,992	2,192	3,542	89	80	99	165
Swansea	3,040	2,801	3,038	3,936	79	96	77	94
The Vale of Glamorgan	834	981	1,238	1,582	78	95	68	58

	Robbery				*Burglary dwelling*			
CDRP	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Dyfed-Powys								
Carmarthenshire	17	8	11	14	282	284	322	266
Ceredigion	5	3	4	8	111	97	88	87
Pembroke	3	9	6	11	175	180	169	164
Powys	3	35	7		128	146	135	149
Gwent								
Blaenau Gwent	15	14	18	10	524	420	283	372
Caerphilly	42	45	35	51	874	704	743	878
Monmouthshire	25	11	6	12	243	210	243	332
Newport	111	149	137	230	1,137	894	987	1,084
Torfaen	23	25	19	26	370	352	306	335
North Wales								
Conwy	24	30	16	26	415	439	575	558
Denbighshire	30	32	42	66	464	462	462	672
Flintshire	44	38	47	41	352	423	453	620
Gwynedd	8	5	27	24	250	273	229	336
Isle of Anglesey	8	13	10	18	175	149	107	218
Wrexham	32	45	52	49	563	432	579	823
South Wales								
Bridgend	18	20	41	28	662	485	500	659
Cardiff	262	198	318	421	2,821	2,197	2,209	2,792
Merthyr Tydfil	27	19	22	17	403	345	309	292
Neath Port Talbot	17	24	28	35	711	554	660	763
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	44	39	42	74	1,465	1,256	1,188	1,360
Swansea	100	118	108	153	1,517	1,296	1,483	1,552
The Vale of Glamorgan	51	42	36	56	804	552	496	642

	Theft of a motor vehicle				*Theft from a vehicle*			
CDRP	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Dyfed-Powys								
Carmarthenshire	475	468	476	466	524	486	551	432
Ceredigion	82	75	72	59	134	102	150	103
Pembroke	134	133	119	143	308	312	264	315
Powys	177	185	174	165	369	359	244	345
Gwent								
Blaenau Gwent	562	468	404	424	828	679	447	582
Caerphilly	1,191	907	783	894	1,551	1,257	1,185	1,400
Monmouthshire	306	255	242	262	747	588	472	629
Newport	958	1,060	849	1,008	1,787	1,801	1,699	1,781
Torfaen	376	384	332	458	801	710	606	894

CDRP	Theft of a motor vehicle 1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	Theft from a vehicle 1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
North Wales								
Conwy	255	233	270	255	790	713	711	791
Denbighshire	414	341	345	411	701	975	1,026	1,058
Flintshire	521	474	433	509	997	1,112	1,154	1,206
Gwynedd	203	166	193	214	915	680	728	793
Isle of Anglesey	129	136	104	132	331	282	375	401
Wrexham	788	553	601	566	1,457	1,521	1,717	1,757
South Wales								
Bridgend	1,471	1,047	925	890	1,404	927	1,029	1,264
Cardiff	4,123	2,807	3,111	3,180	6,697	5,159	5,319	7,818
Merthyr Tydfil	781	769	825	779	904	670	785	748
Neath Port Talbot	1,934	1,342	1,206	1,150	1,262	878	913	1,133
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	2,177	1,778	1,491	1,921	1,796	1,552	1,447	1,865
Swansea	4,300	3,548	3,347	3,243	3,549	3,747	3,587	4,433
The Vale of Glamorgan	1,064	728	652	681	1,591	1,285	1,244	1,318

Note:
Three of the Wales forces implemented the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) prior to the official introduction on 1 April 2002; North Wales in October 2001, and both Dyfed Powys and South Wales in January 2002. Gwent introduced the Standard in April 2002. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police, with violent crime in particular being affected. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not comparable with previous years.

Speed Cameras (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much revenue has been raised in fines imposed as a result of speed cameras in Southend since 1997. [152160]

Caroline Flint: The available information on the number of court fines and fixed penalties issued within the police force area of Essex for the offence of 'speeding detected by camera' for 1997–01 is shown in the table. It is not possible from the data collected centrally to identify Southend.

Information for 2002 will be available in the Spring.

Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for speeding offences detected by cameras[1,2] in the Essex police force area, 1997–01

Offence and year	Fixed penalties Number of tickets[3]	Estimated revenue[4] (£)	Court proceedings Number of fines	Total amount of fine (£)	Average fine[5] (£)
Speeding offences					
1997	18,800	753,700	880	93,900	107
1998	8,700	346,600	1,700	227,400	134
1999	19,800	791,400	2,100	357,400	169
2000	46,300	2,007,200	2,800	317,800	115
2001	81,900	4,911,100	6,500	651,200	101

[1] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999.
[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[3] Paid i.e. no further action.
[4] Estimate based on £40 fixed penalty charge to October 2000. From November 2000 the penalty was raised to £60.
[5] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.

UK Immigration Officials

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many UK immigration officials were in post at *(a)* Heathrow, *(b)* Gatwick, *(c)* Stansted, *(d)* Luton and *(e)* City airport on 1 January in each of the last six years. [148436]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The table sets out the number of full-time equivalent immigration officials employed at the airports listed, as at 1 January for the last six years.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Heathrow	[1]—	632.7	588.7	642.4	721.6	682.6
Gatwick	[1]—	265	258.6	283.6	292.5	278.2
Stansted	48.6	47.7	44.9	48.4	54.6	63.8
Luton	[1]—	24	24	28	28	28
London City	13	13	11	12	14	15

[1] 1999 = Incomplete records available for Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton.

As at 2 January 2004, the UK Immigration Service had a further 103 Immigration Officers who had confirmed places on training courses taking place in January, February and March who were to be posted to either Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted airports.

Taiwanese Nationals (Police Registration)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the requirements for police registration have been lifted in respect of Taiwanese nationals. [150635]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The Government do not recognise Taiwanese nationality, although passports issued by the Taiwanese authorities are accepted for the purposes of travel to and from the United Kingdom. The holders of such documents continue to be required to register with the police in accordance with the requirements of Part 10 of the Immigration Rules. These requirements are a matter which is kept under review.

Serious Crime

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he gives to chief constables on the definition of serious crimes. [152155]

Ms Blears: No specific guidance is given on the definition of serious crime.

All police forces in England and Wales are required to submit monthly recorded crime statistics prepared in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime. This contains a principal crime rule whereby if the sequence of crimes in an incident contains more than one type of crime the most serious crime is counted. In determining the most serious crime, the most serious violent crime takes precedence over the most serious property crime.

A full list of the offence headings which comprise the recorded crime series is issued to police forces, along with their definitions (most of which are in terms of criminal law definitions), as part of the Home Office Counting Rules. The list is also given in Table 3.04 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin 07/03 'Crime in England and Wales 2002–03' which was published in July 2003. That table also shows what offences within the violence against the person category are deemed to be more serious and less serious offences.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 5 February 2004

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Commission for Equality and Human Rights

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Minister for Women if she will make a statement on how she intends to contribute to the creation of a Commission for Equality and Human Rights. [149753]

Jacqui Smith: Establishing the Commission for Equality and Human Rights reflects this Government's commitment that equality matters to everyone—it is not a minority concern. The Commission will give greater support and joined-up advice to individuals, businesses and communities to crack down on discrimination and to promote equality and diversity.

This afternoon I will be chairing the third meeting of the Taskforce that we have brought together to consider the priorities and role of the new Commission. It brings together people with experience, expertise and knowledge on equality and human rights issues.

PRIME MINISTER

Correspondence

Mr. Brady: To ask the Prime Minister when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Altrincham and Sale, West on 20 January, ref. 149941. [153090]

The Prime Minister: I replied to the hon. Member on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 757–58W.

Iraq

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister if he will place in the Library all correspondence between his press secretary and the Director General of the BBC relating to the lead-up to and conduct of the war in Iraq. [153012]

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Prime Minister if he will place in the Library correspondence from *(a)* himself and *(b)* other members of his office to the BBC relating to (i) the conduct of the war in Iraq and (ii) interviews with Dr. Kelly by BBC reporters. [152967]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend and the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for West Derbyshire (Mr. McLoughlin) in the debate on Lord Hutton's Report on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 768.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister if he will establish an independent United Kingdom inquiry to investigate the intelligence which led the United Kingdom to take military action in Iraq in 2003; and if he will make a statement. [153930]

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will take steps to establish a cross-party joint committee of both Houses to inquire into the foreign and domestic intelligence regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; [153082]

(2) if he will establish an independent inquiry into the foreign and domestic intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. [153083]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friend to the statement given by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 625–28.

Surveillance Commissioner

Mr. Miller: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make an announcement about the re-appointment of the right hon. Sir John MacDermott as Surveillance Commissioner under Part III of the Police Act 1997. [153773]

The Prime Minister: In accordance with Section 91 of the Police Act 1997, I have agreed to re-appoint Sir John MacDermott as Surveillance Commissioner for Northern Ireland with effect from 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. The remit of each Surveillance Commissioner covers the whole of the United Kingdom so that any Surveillance Commissioner can act in jurisdictions other than his own.

The right hon. Sir John MacDermott has served as a Surveillance Commissioner since 1998.

The Commissioners are appointed under the provisions of Part III of the Police Act 1997. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 extended the Commissioners' remit. Since the authorisation of intrusive surveillance operations forms a key component of the Government's response to serious and organised crime, I attach considerable importance to these appointments and I am delighted that Sir John has accepted his re-appointment. In conjunction with Sir Andrew Leggatt, their substantial judicial experience, particularly of the criminal justice system, will provide independent oversight of surveillance operations, which although operationally important, must also be subject to stringent safeguards.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Business Support Schemes

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the business support schemes being operated by the Government. [148193]

Ms Hewitt: All DTI funded business support schemes are being replaced with a small set of more strategically focussed products. Four of these new products (Small Firms Loan Guarantee, Grant for Research and Development, Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships) have been available since spring 2003. Further products will be made available from April this year.

Public Bodies (Membership)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the members of the *(a)* Advisory Committee on Coal Research, *(b)* Energy Advisory Panel, *(c)* Measurement Advisory Committee, *(d)* Overseas Project Board and *(e)* London and South East Industrial Development Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151299]

Ms Hewitt: The Measurement Advisory Committee (MAC) consists of the following members. Members are not remunerated.

Members	*Period of Appointment*
Colin Gaskell—Chair	1 April 2002 to 31 March 2005
Penny Allisy-Roberts	1 July 2001 to 30 June 2004
Peter Bleasdale	1 May 2003 to 30 April 2006
Mike Buckley	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
Peter Cowley	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
Les Ebdon	1 July 2002 to 30 June 2005
David Ellix	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
Richard Freeman	1 May 2003 to 30 April 2006
Ken Grattan	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
David Holmwood	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
Alan Johnson	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
Roger Jones	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
John Latham	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
Steve Lower	18 March 2002 to 31 March 2005
Janet Townsend	1 May 2003 to 30 April 2006
John Tyrer	1 May 2003 to 30 April 2006

London and South East Industrial Development Board consists of the following members. Members are not remunerated.

Members	*Period of appointment*
John McCready—Chair	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005
Thomas William Cohen	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Peter Edwin Croucher	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Praful Davda	1 February 2001 to 31 January 2004
Bryan Davies	1 June 2003 to 31 May 2006
Gurbrinder Gill	1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006
Jim Hicks	1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006
Wendy Hyde	1/08/2091 to 31 July 2004
Mei Sim Lai	1/08/2001 to 31 July 2004
Helen Sasson	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004
Indeer Jeet Sodhi	1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006
Robert Stiles	2 January 2001 to 31 January 2004
Graeme Wyles	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2004

Note:
Praful Davda and Robert Stiles have been reappointed for the period 1 February 2004 to 31 January 2007.

The Energy Advisory Panel ceased to exist on 31 July 2003.

I am not responsible for appointments to any body known as the Advisory Committee on Coal Research or the Overseas Project Board.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 74W, on Regional Development Agencies, what the costs of the arrangements for each Regional Development Agency were in the last year for which figures are available. [152022]

Jacqui Smith: I have been advised of the following answers by the individual Regional Development Agencies (RDAs).

Many RDAs share the costs and management of overseas offices with partner organisations in order to maximise efficiency. Total annual outlay for each RDA in 2002–03 was:

	£
Advantage West Midlands	867,488
East of England Development Agency	329,500
East Midlands Development Agency	950,000
London Development Agency	50,000
One North East	969,045
North West Development Agency	698,000
South of England East Development Agency	910,000
South West Regional Development Agency	848,016
Yorkshire Forward[1]	[1]1,196,000

[1] 2003–04 data

Wind Farms

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many miles of new power lines will be needed in *(a)* Yorkshire and *(b)* other parts of England as a result of the planned development of wind farms; and what estimate she has made of the costs. [152450]

Mr. Timms: The plan for remodelling the transmission grid to accommodate new renewable energy generation is currently being prepared by National Grid Transco, Scottish Power and Scottish and Southern Electricity. They are upgrading the initial estimates prepared for, and published by, the Transmission Issues Working Group in June 2003. *(a)* There are no planned upgrades of the transmission system required in Yorkshire. *(b)* For the rest of England there will be a need to upgrade transmission lines but the final plans have not been presented. The costs of adding an additional 6 GW of wind energy in England were estimated at £605 million.

TRANSPORT

Airport Expansion

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what evidence he has collated on the effect of airport expansion on foreign direct investment. [152846]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* We recognise the importance of aviation to the economic prosperity of the United Kingdom. The effects of airport expansion on foreign direct investment were considered in the studies which led to the publication of our recent White Paper, 'The Future of Air Transport'.

Our work suggested that net inflows of foreign direct investment in 1999 were estimated to be almost 50 per cent. of total investment in the UK, and that the strategy set out in the White Paper—including two additional runways in the South East and expansion in the regions—would meet 95 per cent. of foreign business demand. Although our economic appraisal of airport options focused on direct benefits for airport users,

enabling more foreign business travellers to fly to and from the UK will only have a positive effect on foreign direct investment.

Road Accidents (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people *(a)* were killed, *(b)* were seriously injured and *(c)* suffered less severe injuries on roads in Wales, broken down by (i) police force, (ii) constituency, (iii) safety camera partnership and (iv) local authority area, for each year since 1997. [151749]

Mr. Touhig: I have been asked to reply.

Since 1999, this is a matter for the National Assembly for Wales. Some of the information requested has been published by the Welsh Office and the Assembly in the annual series of "Road Accidents: Wales" publications, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many alcohol-related deaths there were in each year since 1980. [152822]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from L. Cook to Mr. Paul Burstow, dated 5 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning the number of alcohol-related deaths in each year since 1980. (152822)

The table shows numbers of deaths certified as due to alcohol abuse, dependence and poisoning, and diseases directly related to alcohol use from 1980 to 2002, the latest year for which figures are currently available. Information on the part that alcohol may have played in deaths from other causes, including other accidents and violence, is not available from death certificates.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] in England and Wales, 1980 to 2002[2]

	Number of deaths
1980	2,575
1981	2,540
1982	2,476
1983	2,472
1984	2,647
1985	2,935
1986	2,933
1987	3,138
1988	3,278
1989	3,517
1990	3,594
1991	3,631
1992	3,553
1993	3,546
1994	3,821
1995	4,231
1996	4,455
1997	4,922
1998	5,272
1999	5,473
2000	5,543
2001	6,020
2002	6,100

[1] For the years 1980–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are as follows:
291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol.
For the years 2001–2002 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol.
The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:
Baker A. and Rooney C. (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 17, pp 5–14.
[2] Deaths registered in each calendar year.

Barnett Formula

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes have been made to the Barnett Formula with regard to the updating of population statistics; and when he expects the Barnett Formula to equalise spending per head between England and Scotland. [151762]

Mr. Boateng: The Barnett formula is updated periodically to take account of population estimates produced by the Office for National Statistics. As set out in the Statement of Funding Policy, the latest mid-year estimates are used; the ONS published mid-year estimates for 2002 in September 2003. Spending plans for Scotland were published in the "2002 Spending Review: New Public Spending Plans 2003–06" (Cm 5570, July 2002) and plans for the 2004 spending review period will be published later this year.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish for each year from 1998–99 to 2005–06 a table showing the levels of expenditure in England comparable to that expenditure in *(a)* Northern Ireland, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales that is both within the assigned budget and within the scope of the Barnett formula, at the same level of programme detail as is provided in the analysis of 2002–03 provision in Annex C of the third edition of Funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly: A Statement of Funding Policy. [152446]

Mr. Boateng: The Barnett formula is used to determine increases in spending of the devolved Administrations, rather than the previous levels of spending in England or the devolved Administrations. Information on subprogrammes for earlier years was published in Annex C of the first and second editions of the Statement of Funding Policy in 1999 and 2000.

Child Care Tax Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many and what proportion of claims for the child care tax credit have been subject to follow-up checks in each year since its introduction to establish whether the child or children are being cared for by *(a)* registered childminder, nursery, play scheme, or out of school club, *(b)* a child care scheme run on Crown property which does not need to be registered, *(c)* schools and other establishments exempt from registration, *(d)* providers of care for children aged eight years and over which is approved by specifically accredited organisations and *(e)* an approved home child care provider; and how many of those checks resulted in (i) investigations, (ii) penalties, (iii) prosecutions, (iv) convictions, (v) end of year overpayment recovery and (vi) cessation of the award; [152739]

(2) what assessment he has made of the level of fraud in the child care tax credit element of the working tax credit; [152740]

(3) how many allegations of non-compliant application for child care tax credit have been reported to *(a)* the childminder's hotline and *(b)* his Department; and how many of those allegations resulted in (i) investigations, (ii) penalties, (iii) prosecutions, (iv) convictions, (v) end-of-year overpayment recovery and (vi) cessation of the award; [152741]

(4) how many calls have been made to the childminder's hotline in each of the last 12 months; [152743]

(5) if he will estimate the cost of running the childminder's hotline in the last year; and how many full-time equivalent staff are employed to deal with calls. [152744]

Dawn Primarolo: The child care tax credit was part of the working families and disabled person's tax credits (WFTC and DPTC), which were available between October 1999 and April 2003. It contributed to the cost of eligible child care for working families. It was replaced in April 2003 by the child care element of working tax credit (WTC).

Applications for WFTC and DPTC could be investigated for a number of reasons, including where there were concerns about claims for the child care tax credit within the applications. However, this was only one component part of the award. An inquiry may involve more than one element of non-compliance, and it is not possible to say how many investigations related only to this particular aspect. However, the Inland Revenue successfully prosecuted and convicted 14 cases where child care was a consideration. Of these, six were solely concerning child care.

For WTC, the Inland Revenue will be able to arrive at an error rate for the tax credit population when it is in a position to carry out a full random inquiry programme on a complete set of finalised awards for 2004–05.

A dedicated telephone line was set up in February 2000 for child care providers as a result of consultation with the National Child Minders Association. This gave child care providers the opportunity to tell the Inland Revenue about any concerns regarding claims for child care costs. Up until 31 March 2003, over 2,100 allegations were received in respect of WFTC and DPTC.

With the introduction of working tax credit (WTC) in April 2003, a new service, the Childcare Provider Helpline, was set up to deal with queries about the scheme and receive information about specific concerns relating to claims to child care costs. Between then and the end of January the helpline has handled over 3,800 calls. It is run as a very small part of the tax credits helpline and it is therefore not possible to isolate the number of staff handling these calls, or the cost.

It is not possible to identify the number of allegations that have been reported outside of the Childcare Provider Helpline. Every allegation received is given careful consideration and, where there is sufficient reason, steps are taken to examine the circumstances more closely.

Child Trust Funds

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will make a statement on the reasons for the decision to have two different initial payment values into Child Trust Funds; [152644]

(2) what assessment he has made of the likelihood of Child Trust Funds discouraging teenage children from saving through other means; [152645]

(3) what targets his Department has set to encourage *(a)* low income, *(b)* middle income and *(c)* higher income families to make additional contributions to Child Trust Funds; [152722]

(4) what assessment he has made of the ability of families on low incomes to make additional top-up contributions into Child Trust Funds; [152723]

(5) if he will make it his policy to make an additional contribution into a Child Trust Fund when the child reaches 18 years of age on the condition that the accrued funds will be spent on educational facilities; [152724]

(6) whether the Government will make a contribution to a Child Trust Fund between the child's seventh and 18th birthday; and if he will make a statement. [152725]

Ruth Kelly: The objectives of the Child Trust Fund are to:

ensure that in future all children have a financial asset at the start of adult life to invest in their futures;

help people understand the benefits of saving and investing;

encourage parents and children to develop the savings habit and engage with financial institutions; and

build on financial education to help people make better financial choices throughout their lives.

All children will receive a Government endowment of £250 when their Child Trust Fund account is opened. Families on child tax credit, with an income below the threshold (currently £13,230) will receive an additional £250. The additional endowment for children in low income families will help give their Child Trust Fund accounts a good start and ensures that the Child Trust Fund is both a universal and progressive policy—helping to extend opportunity to all, while targeting support to those that are most in need. The Government have confirmed that there will be a further progressive payment at age seven. This structure provides a foundation on which the Government will build in future.

Financial information and education are key to helping people make better financial choices throughout their lives. The Government view Child Trust Fund holders as the best judge of what most meets their future needs. By enabling children to interact with their own savings and investment account, and accompanying this with financial education in schools, the Child Trust Fund will help young people to understand the advantages of saving. The Government will commission a range of teaching and learning materials to meet children's needs at different ages, moving towards guidance on possible uses of financial assets, including continuing to save, as the child grows into adulthood.

We do not believe that setting targets for saving in the Child Trust Fund would be helpful since it risks distorting savings priorities. Information and guidance accompanying the Child Trust Fund will encourage parents to consider their savings priorities—be that the repayment of any debt, the need for 'rainy day' savings they can access and/or longer-term savings for their child in the Child Trust Fund.

We are currently developing a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Child Trust Fund.

Research has shown that people on low incomes can and do save. Early findings on the Saving Gateway support this.

Economic Inactivity

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of the total cost to the economy of economic inactivity. [152935]

Ruth Kelly: The performance of the UK labour market over recent years has been strong by both international and historical standards. In 2002 the standardised inactivity rate for persons aged 15–64 was 23.4 per cent. for the United Kingdom, well below the EU average of 30.2 per cent.

Sharp declines in the unemployment rate have boosted UK GDP growth, and a falling inactivity rate would increase labour supply and add further to the growth rate of the UK economy. That is why this Government attach priority to reducing the inactivity rate. In addition to helping the unemployed back to work, and increasing the skills of the lowest skilled workers, Government policies aim to encourage inactive people who are able to work back into the labour market.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the major causes of economic inactivity. [152936]

Ruth Kelly: The Government have published an analysis of the extent and causes of inactivity and unemployment, and of the policies in place to address them, in "Full employment in every region" (HM Treasury/Department of Work and Pensions, December 2003).

Employment Statistics

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* men aged 64 and *(b)* women aged 59 are in paid employment; and if he will estimate the average earnings of each group. [153010]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from L. Cook to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 5 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question on how many *(a)* men aged 64 and *(b)* women aged 59 are in paid employment; and the estimated average earnings of each group (153010).

The numbers of people in paid employment are estimated from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). People are considered to be in paid employment if they have done at least one hour of paid work as an employee in the week prior to their LFS interview or if they have a job that they are temporarily away from. The self-employed and people who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported training and employment programmes are excluded.

Average earnings are estimated from the 2003 New Earnings Survey (NES) and are provided for full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period. This is the standard definition used for NES tables. The NES does not collect data on the self-employed and people who do unpaid work.

The following table gives the average gross weekly pay (including overtime) for the groups requested.

Estimate of the numbers of (a) men aged 64 and (b) women aged 59 in Great Britain who are in paid employment and the average gross weekly earnings of each group, spring 2003

	Estimate of number in paid employment	*Average gross weekly wage (£)*
Males aged 64	60,000	428.10
Females aged 59	64,000	361.10

Notes:

1. Information is provided for average gross weekly earnings including overtime and relates to full-time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was unaffected by absence.
2. The LFS estimates have not been adjusted to reflect the 2001 Census results and the figures are not seasonally adjusted. The estimates relate to full-time employees.

Source:

For earnings data: New Earnings Survey, April 2003.

For numbers of persons in employment: ONS Labour Force Survey, Spring (March to May) 2003.

Gangmasters

John Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what amount has been recovered since 1994 in unpaid income tax and national insurance contributions from gangmasters operating in the agricultural sector. [152878]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Connarty) on 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 567W.

Inward Investment (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the levels of inward investment in Wales for each year since 1990, broken down by *(a)* source country and *(b)* destination by (i) constituency and (ii) local authority area. [151758]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have been asked to reply.

The figures collected by UK Trade and Investment Inward Investment Group for Wales since 1990 broken down by source country are as follows. The destination of these projects are not recorded by constituency or local authority area.

This is based on information provided by companies at the time of announcement of the decision to invest in the UK. These figures include only those projects where the Inward Investment Group and its regional partners were involved or which have come to their notice.

	1990–91	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*	*1996–97*
Australia	2	2	2	0	0	1	1
Austria	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Belgium	0	2	2	1	1	3	2
Bermuda	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	1	3	1	4	3	1	1
China	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Denmark	1	1	3	0	1	1	0
Finland	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
France	7	5	4	4	1	3	2
Germany	6	12	10	5	5	2	2
Greece	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hong Kong	0	0	1	2	0	1	0
India	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ireland	2	2	2	5	3	1	1
Israel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	1	2	3	2	0	4	4
Japan	7	8	2	0	7	6	8
Korea	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Kuwait	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Liberia	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Lichtenstein	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
Netherlands	1	3	4	4	1	0	2
New Zealand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	1	2	0	1	2	1	0
Poland	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Singapore	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
South Africa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spain	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Sweden	3	2	1	0	1	1	1
Switzerland	1	1	4	2	3	0	3
Taiwan	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Thailand	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
US	27	20	24	19	21	23	14

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Australia	2	1	1	0	1	3
Austria	0	0	1	0	1	0
Belgium	0	0	0	0	0	2
Bermuda	0	0	0	0	1	0
Canada	1	1	2	0	3	2
China	0	0	0	0	0	1
Denmark	2	1	0	0	0	1
Finland	0	0	0	0	0	1
France	3	3	2	0	6	4
Germany	7	6	7	3	5	3
Greece	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hong Kong	0	1	1	0	1	1
India	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ireland	1	1	3	4	7	4
Israel	0	0	0	0	0	1
Italy	3	2	2	2	0	4
Japan	12	5	7	6	8	2
Korea	0	1	0	0	1	0
Kuwait	0	0	0	0	0	1
Liberia	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lichtenstein	1	1	0	1	0	0
Netherlands	1	2	0	1	2	1
New Zealand	0	0	0	1	0	0
Norway	1	2	0	1	1	1
Poland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Singapore	0	0	0	2	0	1

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
South Africa	0	0	0	0	2	0
Spain	0	0	1	1	0	0
Sweden	0	0	0	1	1	1
Switzerland	0	0	1	1	1	1
Taiwan	1	1	1	2	0	1
Thailand	0	0	0	0	0	0
Turkey	0	1	0	0	0	0
US	20	18	17	13	20	21

Spread Betting

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to the Financial Services Authority of regulating the United Kingdom spread-betting industry was in 2003–04. [152530]

Ruth Kelly: In 2003–04 the Financial Services Authority (FSA) estimates that it charged fees of approximately £600,000 to the main firms for which spread-betting represents a large part of their regulated activities. More details are not available.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with officials from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport regarding the effect of stamp duty land tax on leases on the licensing trade. [152609]

Ruth Kelly: There have been no recent discussions with officials from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Meetings have been held previously with representatives of various parties with an interest in stamp duty land tax as applied to leases, including the licensing trade.

Tax Credits

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff of *(a)* the Inland Revenue and *(b)* its contractors have been allocated to work on tax credits for each year since their introduction. [145947]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the number of staff (full-time equivalents) working in the tax credit office or in the Inland Revenue contact centres dealing with new tax credits.

Number of staff (full-time equivalents)

As at	TCO	TCO (NI)	NTC contact centres
1 October 1999	3,656	[1]—	—
1 April 2000	3,568	134	—
1 April 2001	3,455	163	—
1 April 2002	3,357	173	—
1 April 2003	3,532	296	1,954
1 January 2004	3,157	231	2,301

[1] n/a

There are also a significant number of staff working on tax credits in other areas of the Inland Revenue and for its contractors, either full-time or as part of a wider role. However full information is not held centrally and could not be collated without incurring disproportionate cost.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what elements of the new tax credits IT system will require systems testing before April; and when that systems testing will *(a)* commence and *(b)* conclude. [150533]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The new tax credits IT system will be upgraded in April 2004 to allow awards for 2003–04 to be finalised and awards for 2004–05 to be renewed. This will require both new software and changes to existing software. The first stage of IT testing started in September. Further stages of testing have subsequently followed and are planned to be completed for April.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Grants

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants were paid by the Arts Council to arts organisations in the past five years, broken down by *(a)* opera, *(b)* dance, *(c)* theatre and *(d)* other art, and by company. [152324]

Estelle Morris: The following table supplied by Arts Council England provides a breakdown of their Grant-in-Aid funding by area of activity.

£000

Grants by area of activity	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
Audience Development/New Audiences	4,442	5,289	5,151	1,262	493
Collaborative Arts/Cross Artform	16,541	16,866	42,092	41,711	46,119
Dance	23,236	25,521	17,982	17,634	24,729
Drama/Theatre	27,165	29,987	29,947	30,289	71,670
Literature	1,551	1,707	1,498	1,469	3,408
Music[1]	43,348	47,790	29,924	29,911	48,549
Visual Arts	5,148	9,599	6,067	5,483	22,279

[1] The figure for music includes Opera—a separate figure is not available.

The same information broken down by Company could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Fishing Fleet

1. **Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how the size of the UK's fishing fleet has changed in the last five years. [152863]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of UK fishing vessels has fallen by 13 per cent. since the beginning of 1999.

Public Procurement

16. **Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the status is of her Department's guide to public procurement. [152880]

Alun Michael: The Department publishes a number of guidances on public procurement, and contributes to others that are available publicly.

The Department has published extensive guidance on the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative—a strand of work arising from recommendations in the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy.

More guidance is in preparation. I am happy to write to my hon. Friend with details of where the guidance can be found.

Waste Management Plan (Essex)

17. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what consultation she has had in the past six months with Essex county council over its waste management plan. [152881]

Margaret Beckett: None. County Waste Management Plans are a matter for the relevant county. It is for them to decide, following consultation with local stakeholders, what options they include in line with the Waste Hierarchy and Best Practicable Environmental Option as set out in 'Waste Strategy 2000'.

Energy Efficiency Commitment

18. **Alan Simpson** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans she has to extend the Energy Efficiency Commitment in line with the commitments made in the Energy White Paper. [152883]

Margaret Beckett: In the Energy White Paper the Government acknowledged the continued important role of the Energy Efficiency Commitment in meeting energy efficiency and carbon abatement targets in the domestic sector and made a commitment to publicly consult on an expansion of the EEC to run from 2005 to at least 2008, at possibly twice its current level of activity. We aim to launch the public consultation in spring this year.

Construction Industry

19. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to promote the wider use of sustainable and recycled materials in the construction industry. [152884]

Alun Michael: The Government established a Sustainable Buildings Task Group in order to identify ways to improve the sustainability of our building stock. It is due to report to Ministers in the spring.

Steps already taken range from economic instruments, such as the Landfill tax and the Aggregates Levy which encourage the recycling of waste, to the Waste and Resources Action Programme, to increase the use of secondary and recycled aggregate in the construction industry.

Common Agricultural Policy

20. **Mr. Moore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, what discussions she has held with the Scottish Executive about the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. [152885]

Mr. Bradshaw: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State remains in close and regular contact with Scottish Executive Ministers on this and other matters.

Sewage Plants

21. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make a statement on the regulation of sewage plants in relation to mosquito infestation. [152908]

Alun Michael: The High Court ruled, on 23 May 2003, that odour from sewage works is within the scope of the statutory nuisance regime and that mosquito nuisance is not. Thames Water has appealed against that ruling. If the appeal is successful, further legislative change may be necessary. The Government are now waiting for a decision by the House of Lords.

Transport (Environmental Impact)

22. **Tom Brake** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with the Department for Transport on the environmental impact of transport. [152886]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, and other Defra Ministers have regular discussions with the Ministerial team in the Department for Transport on many matters, including the environmental impacts of transport.

Avian Influenza

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the levels of imports of poultry meat from *(a)* Thailand, *(b)* Pakistan, *(c)* Indonesia, *(d)* Vietnam and *(e)* other countries in South East Asia were in each of the last 24 months for which records are available. [151965]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The importation into the EU of poultry meat from third countries must be in accordance with European Community legislation. The exporting country must be approved to export to the EU, there must be agreed animal and public health conditions in place and the meat must be produced in EU approved establishments.

The levels of imports of poultry meat from the following countries as follows:

Units: Tonnes

	Thailand	*Indonesia*	*Hong Kong*	*Singapore*
2001				
November	2,639	—	—	—
December	2,936	—	—	—
2002				
January	2,783	—	—	—
February	2,656	—	—	—
March	3,170	—	—	—
April	1,218	—	—	—
May	3,077	—	—	—
June	2,412	—	—	—
July	2,919	—	—	—
August	3,377	—	1	—
September	3,103	—	—	—
October	2,255	—	—	44
November	2,450	—	—	87
December	4,404	24	—	66
2003				
January	4,593	—	—	107
February	4,194	—	—	88
March	4,099	—	—	69
April	2,142	—	—	86
May	3,010	—	—	—
June	3,267	—	—	17
July	3,472	—	—	—
August	4,281	—	—	34
September	2,818	—	—	57
October	4,772	—	—	106

Source:
HM Customs and Excise

The information in the table shows imports of poultry meat (includes fresh/frozen and cooked meat) from Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore from which imports of poultry meat are permissible.

Our records also show imports of poultry meat have come from Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Imports are not permitted from these countries but we believe that these represent consignments which have been exported from GB, rejected and returned or goods where the incorrect Customs code has been entered:

	Number
Japan	8
South Korea	73
Taiwan	22

Birds and Habitat Directives

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress she is making in the application of the Birds and Habitat Directives to the UK's offshore waters. [152882]

Mr. Bradshaw: Consultation on draft Regulations to apply the Birds and Habitats Directives to the UK's offshore waters ended on 29 October 2003. Responses highlighted the complexity of transposing these Directives to the offshore area. We nevertheless hope to lay the Regulations in the summer.

Consultation Documents

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list those individuals and organisations to whom *(a)* her Department, *(b)* its Executive Agencies and *(c)* the non-departmental public bodies for which her Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultations (i) sustainable farming and food: meeting the new data needs: a consultation document and (ii) consultation on the implementation of the dairy elements of the Common Agricultural Policy reform package; and from whom each received a response in each case. [152249]

Alun Michael: The Consultation Document on new data needs for sustainable farming and food was published on the Defra and Office for National Statistics websites and widely circulated. Copies were also placed in the House Library. 36 responses were received from outside the Department. They have informed the National Statistics Strategic Review of Farming and Food Statistics, which is nearing completion. It is expected that a report of this review (together with the results from the consultation) will be published shortly.

The consultation on the implementation of the dairy elements of the CAP reform package closed on 3 February. Details of responses received will be published shortly.

A list of those who were sent a copy of these consultations has been placed in the Library of the House. Respondents are identified with an asterisk.

In answer to Parts B and C of this question, this information is not held centrally and to do so would incur disproportionate costs.

Crematoria Emissions

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ensure that future measurements of emissions from crematoria will be monitored by independent organisations. [151303]

Alun Michael: Crematoria are one of many categories of process regulated under the Local Air Pollution Control regime. It is normal practice for local authority regulators to include in LAPC authorisations conditions requiring monitoring of relevant emissions. It is open to operators to undertake such monitoring themselves or to contract out to external organisations. Local authorities may also commission their own compliance monitoring where they consider there is a case for doing so.

Departmental Investigation Officers

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many

investigation officers are employed by her Department; and how many investigation officers were recruited in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [152382]

Alun Michael: Defra currently employs 13 Investigation Officers, one Senior Investigation Officer and one Chief Investigation Officer.

The number of Investigation Officers recruited in *(a)* 2001 was none, *(b)* 2002 was four, including one casual, and *(c)* 2003 was two. However, the total number of Officers in the three grades is unchanged since 2001, but one post has been converted from a Senior Investigation Officer to an Investigation Officer.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set out the purpose and job description of an investigation officer. [152383]

Alun Michael: Defra's Investigation Officers work in the Investigation Branch of the Legal Services Directorate General. The overall aim of the Branch is to provide the Department, its agencies, the National Assembly of Wales Agriculture Department and the Forestry Commission with a criminal investigation service of high professional and ethical standards delivered in a manner that is consistent with the law including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

The key duties of an Investigation Officer involve detailed investigation into fraud and irregularities covering a wide range of subjects including animal welfare, cattle identification, tree felling, veterinary medicines, pesticides use and plant health. Officers undertake detailed investigations and prepare cases with a view to prosecution, by Defra's in-house team, where appropriate.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total annualised cost to public funds is of her Department's force of investigation officers in 2003–04. [152384]

Alun Michael: Defra's Investigation Branch is forecast to spend £481,600 on pay and £103,500 on non-pay running costs in 2003–04.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will place in the Library a copy of *(a)* the July 2003 recruitment advertisement and *(b)* the required skills and qualifications for investigation officers. [152385]

Alun Michael: Copies of the 2003 recruitment advertisement for Investigation Officers, and the accompanying information pack that contained details of the required skills and qualifications have been placed in the Library of the House.

Foot and Mouth Contractors

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to her answer to the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk (Mr. Bellingham) of 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 391, on rural businesses (payment), if she will break down the £800 million of public money saved as a result of investigations into the validity of invoices submitted by foot and mouth contractors by main budget headings. [152699]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* In his answer to the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk (Mr. Bellingham), on 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 391, my right hon. Friend the Minister for Rural Affairs and Environmental Quality made reference to "... about £800 million" and "... some £800 million" being saved for the public purse.

The public money saved as a result of investigations into the validity of charges submitted by foot and mouth contractors is broken down into the following main budget headings:

	£ million
Cleansing and Disinfection	672.8
Logistics	47.
Claims Surveying	7.1
Value Recovery	4.0
Forensic Quantum and Accounting	48.8

The public money saved to date does not include the £52.9 million being withheld from businesses in connection with disputed charges arising from the provision of goods, services and works during the outbreak.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people employed in her Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148632]

Alun Michael: Defra only came into being in June 2001. Figures for the number of staff in the Department and its Agencies who received payment of Statutory Sick Pay in each of the following categories for calendar years 2002 and 2003 are as follows:

	2002	*2003*
Less than one week	1,963	1,859
1–3 weeks	1,301	1,178
4–6 weeks	327	287
7–12 weeks	310	260
13–20 weeks	343	215
21–28 weeks	5	4

Figures for the part year June 2001–December 2001 are not available. The Department is committed to managing sickness absence effectively and meeting its targets for reduced sickness absence as set out in departmental plans.

This response covers the core-Department and its Agencies, which comprise the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, Pesticides Safety Directorate, Central Science Laboratory, Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Rural Payments Agency and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Chechnya

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1251W, on Chechnya, what plans his Department has to make direct representations to the Chechen authorities regarding human rights conditions in Chechnya. [152347]

Mr. Rammell: The respect of human rights in Chechnya is primarily the responsibility of the Russian Federal Government. Consequently UK Government representations have been, thus far, to the Federal Government. That said, we are currently considering appropriate representations to the local authorities in Chechnya regarding human rights. However, this is complicated by the fact that our diplomats in Moscow are precluded by security considerations from travelling to Chechnya.

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what evidence he has collated of Chechen involvement in *(a)* conflicts in (i) Afghanistan, (ii) Iraq and (iii) Kashmir and *(b)* terrorism against (iv) EU and (v) USA interests since 1 January 2001. [152575]

Mr. Rammell: Some Chechen extremists had clear links to terrorists in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime. Chechen groups set up an "embassy" in Kabul in early 2001. Some Chechens fought with the Taliban and al-Qaeda against the Northern Alliance and subsequently against Coalition forces. We have no strong evidence of Chechen involvement in Iraq, although some media bulletins have reported Chechens in military action there. We have no evidence of Chechen involvement in the conflict in Kashmir.

EU and US nationals have been kidnapped by Chechen militants. Arjan Erkel, a Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) worker and Dutch citizen, was kidnapped in Dagestan in August 2002 and remains in captivity to this day, and Kenneth Gluck, a MSF worker and US citizen, was held by militants for a short time in January 2001. A number of EU (including UK) and US nationals were taken hostage during the Dubrovka theatre siege in October 2002. One US, one Dutch, and one Austrian citizen died during the rescue attempt by Russian security forces.

Colombia

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of recent developments in the terrorist tactics employed by Colombia's revolutionary armed forces, with particular reference to urban terrorism. [148950]

Mr. Rammell: We are concerned that some recent Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) attacks have been carried out in urban areas. FARC activity had hitherto been concentrated primarily in rural areas. We have taken account of these latest developments in our Travel Advice for British nationals visiting Colombia.

We condemn the terrorist activities of all illegal armed groups in Colombia. We support the Colombian Government in the fight against terrorism and in its efforts to seek a negotiated solution to Colombia's prolonged internal conflict.

Diego Garcia

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in the study considering the feasibility of repopulating the atolls around the Diego Garcia; what representations the Government have made to the US authorities to allow some Illois to visit the islands around Diego Garcia; what steps the Government are taking to ensure that vessels chartered for such visits are made available; and if he will make a statement. [152540]

Mr. Rammell: A study by independent experts into the feasibility of resettlement of the Chagos islands was commissioned in April 2000. The report on the first phase of the study was completed in June 2000 and the report on the second phase, which incorporated findings from the first, was completed in June 2002. Copies of these reports are in the Library of the House. The study concluded that short-term habitation for limited numbers would be possible but only on a subsistence basis while any long-term settlement would be precarious, and costly. No final decisions have been taken on any further phase of this feasibility study.

We have twice put in hand preparations to arrange a visit by the Chagossians to the islands around Diego Garcia, but these fell through for reasons beyond our control. We remain in contact with the US authorities on the re-instatement of a visit once the situation permits and provided that suitable arrangements can be made, including the charter of a suitable vessel.

Iraq

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any British companies bidding for reconstruction work in Iraq have been blacklisted under the United States Iran-Libya Sanctions Act 1996. [152089]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: No sanctions have been imposed against any UK companies under the United States Iran-Libya Sanctions Act 1996.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what evidence has been found by the Iraq Survey Group of the destruction of the material and equipment dedicated to weapons of mass destruction listed under the clusters of unresolved disarmament issues published at pages 19 to 133 of his Department's White Paper 'Iraq: UN Documents', Cm 5785. [152316]

Mr. MacShane: The Iraq Survey Group has found no clear evidence to support Iraqi claims that it unilaterally destroyed any such material or equipment.

Security Passes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [151567]

Mr. Rammell: Over the last 12 months the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has had 33 passes lost and 12 passes reported as stolen.

Surplus Nuclear Materials

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place in the G8 ad hoc group on the disposition of surplus military nuclear materials on the forthcoming shipment to France from the United States of surplus weapons plutonium in France; and whether the United Kingdom has *(a)* been asked to and *(b)* offered to participate in this programme. [150831]

Mr. MacShane: The forthcoming shipment was noted at the last G8 ad hoc group on plutonium disposition on 4 December 2003. As part of its commitment to co-operative threat reduction, the UK has committed £70 million towards multilateral efforts to secure the disposition of surplus weapons-grade plutonium in Russia. This follows a US-Russia agreement to each dispose of 34 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium. The forthcoming shipment contributes to these efforts.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Cambridgeshire Schools

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what meetings the Minister of State for School Standards has held since 1 December 2003 with *(a)* the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mrs. Campbell) and *(b)* the opposition group leader on Cambridgeshire county council to discuss budgetary problems in Cambridgeshire schools. [150836]

Mr. Miliband: I have met the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mrs. Campbell) and the opposition group leader on Cambridgeshire county council and separately the head of the council and his senior staff on one occasion since 1 December to discuss school funding.

Excellence Challenge Funding

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in each local education authority area received Excellence Challenge funding in the current financial year; and what the total funding made available in the current financial year under the programme was in each local education authority area. [145432]

Alan Johnson: The Excellence Challenge programme is now known as "Aimhigher". The answer is given in the table. The figures in column 3 include funding for schools, sixth form colleges and further education colleges within each LEA area.

LEA name	*Number of schools receiving Aimhigher funding in 2003–04*	*Total Aimhigher allocation in 2003–04 (£)*
City of London	0	
Camden	10	470,001
Greenwich	14	560,000
Hackney	9	360,000
Hammersmith and Fulham	8	332,000
Islington	9	404,000
Kensington and Chelsea	12	189,700
Lambeth	10	332,000
Lewisham	13	554,000
Southwark	13	407,191
Tower Hamlets	16	582,000
Wandsworth	9	552,000
Westminster	0	0
Barking and Dagenham	8	473,982
Barnet	4	229,571
Bexley	0	0
Brent	13	608,000
Bromley	7	77,000
Croydon	16	496,256
Ealing	13	649,000
Enfield	17	652,236
Haringey	11	464,000
Harrow	0	0
Havering	0	0
Hillingdon	5	205,784
Hounslow	14	497,870
Kingston upon Thames	0	0
Merton	0	0
Newham	15	793,000
Redbridge	0	0
Richmond upon Thames	0	0
Sutton	0	0
Waltham Forest	17	704,000
Birmingham	76	3,317,000
Coventry	9	270,030
Dudley	2	77,000
Sandwell	25	564,988
Solihull	4	404,478
Walsall	7	261,168
Wolverhampton	21	480,592
Knowsley	11	470,000
Liverpool	32	1,356,000
St. Helens	12	652,000
Sefton	22	961,000
Wirral	23	1,023,082
Bolton	2	77,000
Bury	0	0
Manchester	23	1,175,000
Oldham	15	442,195
Rochdale	14	611,000
Salford	17	606,000
Stockport	5	446,741
Tameside	6	253,313
Trafford	3	161,265
Wigan	7	426,343
Barnsley	18	480,493
Doncaster	17	696,134
Rotherham	17	912,000
Sheffield	27	1,352,000
Bradford	27	1,618,000
Calderdale	4	77,000
Kirklees	6	573,485
Leeds	43	2,134,000
Wakefield	6	77,000
Gateshead	10	35,0005
Newcastle upon Tyne	18	806,000
North Tyneside	18	614,000
South Tyneside	11	498,000
Sunderland	17	892,942
Isles of Scilly	0	0
Bath and North East Somerset	0	0
Bristol, City of	22	836,000
North Somerset	4	201,846
South Gloucestershire	0	0
Hartlepool	6	322,000
Middlesbrough	8	530,000
Redcar and Cleveland	11	500,000
Stockton-on-Tees	13	599,000
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	15	829,000
East Riding of Yorkshire	1	71,000
North East Lincolnshire	5	190,211
North Lincolnshire	0	0
North Yorkshire	0	0
York	0	0
Bedfordshire	12	77,000
Luton	12	408,894

LEA name	Number of schools receiving Aimhigher funding in 2003–04	Total Aimhigher allocation in 2003–04 (£)
Buckinghamshire	4	337,340
Milton Keynes	4	226,393
Derbyshire	3	77,000
Derby	8	359,087
Dorset	0	0
Poole	0	0
Bournemouth	0	0
Durham	8	353,466
Darlington	0	0
East Sussex	6	77,000
Brighton and Hove	2	77,000
Hampshire	2	77,000
Portsmouth	3	277,894
Southampton	0	0
Leicestershire	0	0
Leicester	16	987,000
Rutland	0	0
Staffordshire	0	0
Stoke-on-Trent	17	734,000
Wiltshire	0	0
Swindon	0	0
Bracknell Forest	0	0
Windsor and Maidenhead	0	0
West Berkshire	0	0
Reading	0	0
Slough	9	77,000
Wokingham	0	0
Cambridgeshire	0	0
Cheshire	4	315,044
Halton	8	453,000
Warrington	0	0
Devon	0	0
Plymouth	2	77,000
Torbay	0	0
Essex	5	154,000
Southend-on-Sea	5	77,000
Thurrock	3	190,162
Herefordshire	3	123,304
Worcestershire	0	0
Kent	15	343,243
Medway	1	77,000
Lancashire	17	871,636
Blackburn with Darwen	12	414,056
Blackpool	11	331,106
Nottinghamshire	0	0
Nottingham	19	862,001
Shropshire	3	77,000
Telford and Wrekin	3	77,000
Cornwall	3	77,000
Cumbria	7	205,334
Gloucestershire	3	77,000
Hertfordshire	0	0
Lincolnshire	0	0
Norfolk	10	393,154
Northamptonshire	4	77,000
Northumberland	8	77,000
Oxfordshire	1	77,000
Somerset	3	77,000
Suffolk	0	0
Surrey	0	0
Warwickshire	0	0
West Sussex	0	0
Total	1,167	49,916,366

Higher Education (Centres of Excellence)

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the cost to higher education institutions of bidding to become a Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching. [152649]

Alan Johnson: Neither I nor the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) have made any estimates of this nature as the costs will be variable. However, the bidding process for Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has been designed by HEFCE to keep additional costs to a minimum, while ensuring a rigorous selection process. At stage one, institutions will be able to draw on existing practice and readily available information. At stage two, institutions will be provided with additional funding as a contribution to their costs.

Higher Education (Participation Rates)

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many universities have widening participation units. [152661]

Alan Johnson: This information is not available centrally. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) does not collect information about the number of universities that have widening participation units. Most of the 131 higher education institutions funded by HEFCE have widening participation strategies, which set out how they intend to use their widening participation funding allocations. The organisational structure an institution puts in place to administer their strategy varies from institution to institution.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what international comparisons he has made between participation in higher education institutions in the UK from lower social groups and the situation in other countries. [152663]

Alan Johnson: My Department published a paper "Higher Education Funding—International Comparisons" on 12 December 2003, giving an overview of tuition fee, student support and widening participation arrangements in 13 OECD member countries. Copies of this paper are available in the Library of the House. This was followed by a further Departmental paper "Variable Fees—International Evidence" on 22 January this year, giving evidence on the effect of tuition fees on access in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Higher Education Academy

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reason he will make subscription costs from higher education institutions to the Higher Education Academy mandatory for the first three years. [152651]

Alan Johnson: The Higher Education Funding Council for England has determined that, for the first three years, institutional subscription to the HE Academy should be a condition of grant. This indicates the importance that the Council attaches to quality enhancement and the valuable role that the Academy will play. Institutional subscription will enable the HE sector to support the Academy in its set up phase and give institutions a direct stake in the new organisation. It will also provide much-needed financial stability for the Academy during its crucial early period. It is anticipated that after this initial three year start up period, the Academy will be self sustainable through membership subscriptions and other marketable services.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the Higher Education Academy. [152657]

Alan Johnson: The HE Academy will play a major part in enhancing the role of teaching and learning in universities and colleges. It will support curriculum and pedagogic development; facilitate the professional development of all staff teaching in HE; and develop and promote good practice. Paul Ramsden has been appointed as the Chief Executive and will take up post in August 2004 prior to the launch of the Academy in October 2004. The Academy will encompass the existing functions of the Institute for Learning and Teaching in HE (ILTHE) and the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN).

Higher Education Funding

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of gross domestic product the Government is spending on higher and further education and student support in 2003–04. [152635]

Alan Johnson: My Department has responsibility for expenditure on higher and further education for England and student support for England and Wales. Planned expenditure on these areas for 2003–04 represents 1.33 per cent. of UK gross domestic product (GDP).

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the total projected change in the teaching fund allocation to higher education institutions from 2003–04 to 2004–05. [152662]

Alan Johnson: The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) plans to announce its teaching and research allocations to institutions for the academic year 2004–05 in March. They estimate, however, that the funding available for teaching in that year will be £3,830 million, including funding for widening access and improving retention and for rewarding and developing staff. That represents a 5 per cent. increase on the equivalent funding for 2003–04.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who the members of *(a)* Remploy, *(b)* the National Advisory Council on Employment of People with Disabilities, *(c)* the National Disability Council and *(d)* the Teacher Training Agency were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151822]

Alan Johnson: The information requested is listed as follows:

(a) Remploy:

Responsibility for Remploy rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

(b) National Advisory Council on Employment of People with Disabilities:

The Advisory Council ceased to exist on 1 April 1998.

(c) National Disability Council:

The Council ceased to exist on 25 April 2000.

(d) Teacher Training Agency

	Term	*Remunerated*
Chair		
Professor Sir Bryan Follett	21 September 2003 to 20 September 2006	Yes
Board Members		
Dr. John Cater	1 March 2003 to 29 February 2006	No
Professor David Reynolds	1 March 2003 to 29 February 2006	No
Brenda Bigland	1 March 2003 to 29 February 2006	No
Andy Buck	1 March 2003 to 29 February 2006	No
Felicia Lord-Attivor	1 March 2003 to 29 February 2006	No
Christopher Baker	2 September 2002 to 1 September 2005	No
Professor Barbara MacGilchrist	10 October 2003 to 9 October 2006	No
Steven Andrews	10 October 2003 to 9 October 2006	No
Victoria Nye	10 October 2003 to 9 October 2006	No
Professor Jill Bourne	10 October 2003 to 9 October 2006	No

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who the members of *(a)* the Further Education Funding Council, *(b)* the Further Education Funding Council Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Committee, *(c)* the Higher Education Funding Council for England, *(d)* Investors in People UK and *(e)* the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151823]

Alan Johnson: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Further Education Funding Council

The Council ceased to exist on 31 March 2001.

(b) The Further Education Funding Council Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Committee

The Committee ceased to exist on 31 March 2001.

(c) The Higher Education Funding Council for England

	Term	*Remunerated*
Chair		
David Young	1 October 2001 to 30 September 2004	Yes
Board Members		
Stephen Bundred	1 October 2002 to 30 September 2005	Yes
Richard Coldwell	1 December 2003 to 30 November 2006	Yes

(c) The Higher Education Funding Council for England

	Term	Remunerated
Jackie Fisher	1 December 2002 to 30 November 2005	Yes
Ann Lloyd	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2005	Yes
Professor Peter Rubin	15 August 2003 to 14 August 2006	Yes
Peter Saraga	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2005	Yes
Nigel Savage	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2005	Yes
Professor Peter Scott	1 December 2003 to 30 November 2006	Yes
Sir Richard Sykes	1 October 2002 to 30 September 2005	Yes
Ann Tate	15 August 2003 to 14 August 2006	Yes

(d) Investors in People UK

	Term	Remunerated
Chair		
Tim Melville-Ross	1 October 2002 to 30 September 2005	No
Board Members		
Garry Hawkes	1 November 2003 to 31 October 2006	No
Roger Spencer-Jones	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No
Ed Sweeney	1 March 2001 to 29 February 2004	No
Sue Thomas	1 March 2001 to 29 February 2004	No
Dame Geraldine Keegan	1 October 2001 to 30 September 2004	No
Hans Reismann	1 February 2002 to 31 January 2005	No
Lord Tom Sawyer	25 January 2002 to 24 January 2005	No
Norman McLean	25 January 2003 to 24 January 2005	No
Martin Henry	1 October 2002 to 29 September 2005	No
Hugh Try	4 February 2003 to 3 February 2006	No
Professor Robert Fryer	2 June 2003 to 1 June 2006	No
Peter Ayliffe	2 June 2003 to 1 June 2006	No
Sir Nicholas Montagu	2 June 2003 to 1 June 2006	No
Michael Stark	1 March 2001 to 29 February 2004	No

(e) The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

	Term	Remunerated
Chair		
Sir Anthony Greener	23 October 2002 to 30 April 2004	No
Deputy Chair		
Richard Greenhalgh	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No
Board Members		
Jenny Fitton	1 October 1999 to 30 September 2004	No
Edward Gould	5 December 2002 to 30 May 2004	No
Nick Stuart	5 December 2002 to 30 May 2004	No
Sue Kirkham	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No
Jim Rose	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No
Sir David Watson	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No
Ian Ferguson	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No
Mike Tomlinson	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No
Dr. Helen Gilchrist	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No
Mike Beasley	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006	No

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who the members of the *(a)* Centre for Information on Language Teaching, *(b)* Construction Industry Training Board, *(c)* Engineering Construction Industry Training Board, *(d)* Equal Opportunities Commission and *(e)* Funding Agency for Schools were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151824]

Alan Johnson: The information requested is listed as follows.

	Term	Remunerated
(a) The National Centre for Languages (formerly the Centre for Information on Language Teaching)		
Chair		
Professor Leo Murray	January 2004 to January 2007	No
Board members		
Jim Beale	October 2002 to October 2004	No
Dick Bunker	October 2001 to October 2004	No
Janev Christofides	April 2003 to April 2006	No

	Term	*Remunerated*
Jonathon Day	October 2001 to September 2004	No
Anne Farren	October 2001 to October 2004	No
Colin Flint	October 2000 to January 2005	No
Terry Lamb	February 2002 to February 2005	No
Ian Lamont	October 2002 to October 2005	No
Peter Lehmann	October 2002 to October 2004	No
Anthony Lunch	October 2002 to October 2004	No
Hugh Morgan-Williams	October 2002 to October 2004	No
Hilary Munday	April 2003 to April 2006	No
Dr. Susan Price	October 2001 to October 2004	No
Mike Short	October 2001 to October 2004	No
Professor Eric Sunderland	February 2002 to February 2005	No
Peter Thompson	October 2002 to October 2004	No
(b) Construction Industry Training Board		
Chair		
Sir Michael Latham	1 April 2002 to 31 March 2007	Yes
Deputy chair		
Peter Rogerson	1 April 2001 to 31 March 2006	Yes
Board members		
Trevor Gamble	25 June 2001 to 24 June 2004	No
Howard Baggaley	15 July 2002 to 14 July 2005	No
Roderick Tait	1 August 2000 to 31 July 2005	No
Neil Telling	3 December 2001 to 2 December 2005	No
Maurice Denyer	1 April 2001 to 31 March 2006	No
Geoffrey Snow	1 April 2001 to 31 March 2006	No
Geoffrey Lister	1 May 2001 to 30 April 2006	No
Margaret Sullivan	11 March 2002 to 10 March 2007	No
James Wates	3 June 2002 to 2 June 2007	No
Stewart Tilley	1 December 2002 to 30 November 2007	No
John Milne	1 April 2003 to 31 March 2008	No
Brian Houston	4 August 2003 to 3 August 2008	No
Ian Mackey	29 September 2003 to 28 September 2008	No
Robert Stephen	29 September 2003 to 28 September 2008	No
David Adamson	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004	No
George Brumwell	1 April 2003 to 31 October 2004	No
Robert Blackman	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2008	No
Professor Brian Lee	1 April 2001 to 31 March 2004	No
Sadie Walton	3 November 2002 to 3 November 2007	No
(c) Engineering Construction Industry Training Board		
Chair		
Jim Rowland	1 April 1999 to 31 March 2004	Yes
Board members		
Barbara Rider	1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	No
Mike Hockey	1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	No
Louise Ferguson	1 October 2000 to 30 September 2005	No
Richard Leamon	14 January 2002 to 13 January 2007	No
Brian Rogan	3 June 2002 to 2 June 2007	No
Colin Barnes	1 November 2002 to 31 October 2007	No
William McLean	1 November 2002 to 31 October 2007	No
Brenig Williams	1 January 2001 to 31 December 2005	No
Bill Murray	1 April 2003 to 31 March 2008	No
Jeffrey House	5 March 2001 to 4 March 2004	No
Dr. Alix Thom	1 December 2001 to 30 November 2006	No
Paul Corby	1 May 1999 to 30 April 2004	No
Neil Moore	1 February 2002 to 31 January 2007	No
Michael Bretherick	4 August 2003 to 3 August 2004	No

(d) Equal Opportunities Commission

Responsibility for the Commission rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

(e) Funding Agency for Schools

The agency ceased to exist on 31 October 1999.

Publicity Campaigns

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by his Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since 1995–96; what his estimate is for 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [149724]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* Expenditure on information campaigns from the Department's central advertising and publicity budget is set out as follows. In addition to expenditure from this central budget, expenditure from budgets allocated to individual programmes will also include spend on publicity related activity. It is not possible, except at disproportionate cost, to separately identify all such publicity related expenditure. It is, however, possible to identify separately the Department's total expenditure on advertising, and this is also set out as follows:

Advertising and publicity budget

	£000
1995–96	[1]—
1996–97	[1]—
1997–98	10,879
1998–99	13,426
1999–2000	9,902
2000–01	14,595
2001–02	11,688
2002–03	14,089
2003–04[2]	17,092

[1] Not available
[2] Estimated

Total departmental spend on advertising

	£000[1]
1995–96[2]	8,296
1996–97	7,538
1997–98	9,992
1998–99	15,673
1999–2000	11,900
2000–01	29,066
2001–02	20,489
2002–03	11,261
2003–04[3]	17,984

[1] These figures include spend on advertising from the central advertising and publicity budget
[2] Employment Department and Department for Education
[3] Estimated

The spend on advertising fluctuates from year to year. Some campaigns will run over financial years and billing will fall in the later period. The main reasons for the rise in estimated spend on advertising in 2003–04 are: the increased spend on the aimhigher campaign, which targets 13 to 16-year-olds with no history of higher education in their family about the benefits of higher education and gives 16 to 19-year-olds information about how to apply to university and the financial help available to them; increased promotion of Foundation Degrees to employers; and upweighting of publicity for the Connexions service to teenagers

Information on expenditure by agencies and non-departmental public bodies is not held centrally.

Quality Assurance Agency

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the role of the Quality Assurance Agency. [152632]

Alan Johnson: The mission of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is to promote public confidence that the quality of provision and standards of awards in higher education are safeguarded and enhanced. It fulfils this role by conducting regular audits of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and reviewing of HE provision delivered in Further Education Colleges (FECs). It also provides advice and guidance to HEIs and other stakeholders, defining clear and explicit standards which form a reference point for review activities. This includes a qualifications framework, subject benchmark statements, programme specifications and a code of practice for institutions.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the annual budget is for 2003–04 of the Quality Assurance Agency. [152640]

Alan Johnson: The Quality Assurance Agency's work is financed through two main sources of income: subscriptions paid by individual universities and colleges; and contracts with the HE funding bodies and Government Departments. QAA's estimated budget for 2003–04 is £10 million. This sum is made up of:

(a) Funds from UK funding bodies and institutional subscriptions (£8.5 million),

(b) Funds from Department of Health for reviews of all NHS funded healthcare programmes in England (£1.5 million).

Student Finance

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his estimate is of the total cost to his Department of providing financial support to students in higher education after 2006–07. [152517]

Alan Johnson: Information on the costs and benefits associated with the proposal in the Higher Education Bill to allow universities to set their own tuition fees is contained in the Regulatory Impact Assessment published on 8 January alongside the Bill. Because of the nature of a variable scheme, the costs vary greatly according to the decisions that both students and higher education institutions take, and they cannot be estimated precisely at this stage. Copies of the Regulatory Impact Assessment were placed in the Library of the House; it is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website.

The Department's future spending plans on both new and continuing elements of student support will be considered as part of Spending Review 2004.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial assistance is available for students paying maximum tuition fees under *(a)* present arrangements and *(b)* proposed student support from 2006–07; and if he will give a breakdown of such help for students from families with joint family incomes below (i) £15,970, (ii) £22,270 and (iii) £33,533. [152534]

Alan Johnson: The following two tables summarise the financial assistance available to students by income under *(a)* the present arrangements and *(b)* the proposed student support arrangements from 2006–07:

(a) Students paying standard £1,125 fee in 2003–04

£

Residual income	*Fee remission*	*Maintenance loan*[1]
Less than: £20,970	1,125	4,000
of: £31,230	—	4,000

[1] Maintenance loan values shown for students living away from home and studying outside London

(b) Students paying maximum £3,000 fee in 2006–07

£

Residual income	Combined grant	Maintenance loan[1,2]	Fee loan	Bursary
Less than: £15,970	2,700	3,550	3,000	Min £300[3]
of £22.270	1,250	3,550	3,000	Min £300[3]
of £33,533	—	4,440	3,000	Min £300[3]

[1] Maintenance loan values shown for students living away from home and studying outside London.
[2] Under the proposals for a single combined grant of £2,700 in 2006–07, there is a necessary reduction of £850 in the maintenance loan available to offset the potential cost of additional fee loans. Further modelling will be required to confirm this figure and it is possible the amount required to offset costs might rise.
[3] Universities will be expected to offer a bursary of at least £300 for students from poorer backgrounds.
[4] Projected income thresholds and maintenance loan rates for 2006–07 assume inflation of 2.5 per cent. per annum.
Note:
Projected income thresholds and maintenance loan rates for 2006–07 assume inflation on 2.5 per cent. per annum.

These figures are based on the model for a combined grant as set out in the published discussion paper "Moving toward a single combined grant for higher education". Further details on combining the two grants will be announced later.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average tuition fee paid by a student at a further education college in 2003 is in 2003–04. [152574]

Alan Johnson: Data for 2003–04 are not yet available. In 2001–02, the most recent year for which data have been analysed, the average tuition fee for those adults in further education who did pay a fee is around £135.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the additional funding required to meet the additional support measures for students announced by the Government will come from *(a)* existing education budgets and *(b)* additional funding provided by the Treasury. [152665]

Alan Johnson: The enhancements to the student package announced by the Secretary of State on 8 January—increasing the Higher Education grant to £1,500, increasing maintenance loans to the average of basic living costs and writing outstanding loans off after 25 years—will, as set out in the Secretary of State's statement, be met from a reprioritisation within the Department for Education and Skills' budget. The remaining costs of the student support package, including the costs of deferring fees, will be dealt with in the spending review.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much additional funding his Department will require as part of the comprehensive spending review *(a)* to maintain existing funding levels in real terms and *(b)* to meet the cost of the measures (i) announced in the Higher Education Bill and (ii) for the improvement of student support. [152666]

Alan Johnson: Full details of the costs of the Government's proposals announced in the Higher Education Bill, and the associated package of improvements in student support, are set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment published on 8 January alongside the Bill. Copies of the Regulatory Impact Assessment were placed in the Library of the House; it is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) under what circumstances his Department will ignore parental income in deciding eligibility for a student grant; [152734]

(2) at what age his Department will cease to take into account family income when assessing a student's right to receive a student grant under his new proposals for student support. [152735]

Alan Johnson: The income of a student's parents is not taken into account when assessing entitlement to student support in a number of circumstances. The most commonly applied are: the student is aged 25 or over; is currently or has been married; parents are deceased or cannot be found; the student is irreconcilably estranged from their parents; has been self-supporting either through earnings, benefits or training allowances for three years before the start of the course. These arrangements have been in place throughout the existing student support package which was introduced in 1999.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who is entitled to receive education maintenance allowances. [152788]

Alan Johnson: In the first year of the national scheme, all young people aged 16 who are planning to continue their education from September 2004 in a school, sixth form college or a College of Further Education, can apply for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). In the existing EMA pilot areas young people who plan to continue their education into Years 13 and 14 from September 2004, can apply for an EMA. Entitlement to an EMA is dependant on an assessment of household income. Any young person who lives in a household with an income of £30,000 or less is eligible to apply for an EMA.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what he estimates the total cost to the Government will be of fee deferral in each of the three years following the introduction of top-up fees; and how much he estimates universities will receive in fee income in each of those three years. [152789]

Alan Johnson: Information on the costs associated with the proposal in the Higher Education Bill to allow universities to set their own tuition fees is contained in the Regulatory Impact Assessment published on 8 January alongside the Bill. Because of the nature of a variable scheme, the costs vary greatly according to the decisions that higher education institutions take, and they cannot be estimated precisely at this stage. Copies of the Regulatory Impact Assessment were placed in the Library of the House; it is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website.

Student Loans

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his reply of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1405–07W, what the

assumed distribution was in the model of the *(a)* size of means-tested loan taken out and *(b)* size of fee loan, net of any fee remission. [151860]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* In estimating the 13 years figure as the average time for loan repayment—22 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1405–07W—the modelling was undertaken across all students rather than being a figure for an 'average student'. The estimate is based on the whole distribution of borrowers rather than on an 'average student' or a student with average debt—there is therefore no one level of debt on which the estimate is based. Factors that were taken into account in developing the model include:

(i) The future pattern of demand for Higher Education by parental income;

(ii) The proportion of students studying in London, at home or elsewhere;

(iii) The propensity of students to take out loans;

(iv) The distribution of fees actually charged by Higher Education institutions from 2006/07;

(v) The distribution of lengths of courses (based on internal modelling); and

(vi) The pattern of withdrawals from HE courses (based on internal modelling).

The model was applied on the basis of a separate fee grant and HE grant as set out as follows. Once the grants are combined, as announced by the Secretary of State to the House on 27 January 2004, the balance between maintenance loan and fee loan will be slightly different, though the overall impact is likely to be small.

(a) We currently expect that in 2006/07 around 50 per cent. to 55 per cent. of students will be eligible for the full value of the means-tested maintenance loan of—on average—around £4,000. The remaining students are expected to be eligible for at least the non means-tested element of the loan—an average of around £3,000.

(b) For fee loans, our estimates have been prepared using an assumption that 75 per cent. of students could be charged £3,000 and 25 per cent. of students £1,200 (an average fee of £2,550). We expect around 50 per cent. to 55 per cent. of students will receive some fee remission. Under these assumptions, the 40 per cent. to 45 per cent. of students who receive no fee support would be eligible for an average fee loan of £2,550.

As noted above, this is on the basis of a separate fee grant and HE grant. Under the combined grant scheme, we expect that 50 per cent. to 55 per cent. of students would receive all or part of the HE grant of £2,700.

We then assume that 85 per cent. of students will take up maintenance loans and 80 per cent. of students take up fee loans. Loan take-up is assumed to be independent of parental income.

TeacherNet

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the costs involved in producing the TeacherNet Emergencies website were. [152418]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In my earlier replies of 7 May and 8 September I indicated that the cost would be approximately £60,000. The final cost for producing the website was £63,338.

Teachers' Pay

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the pay differentials between teaching staff in schools, further education colleges and higher education institutions. [152690]

Alan Johnson: The statutory pay and conditions of service for teachers in the maintained schools sector in England and Wales are based on the recommendations of an independent pay review body—the School Teachers' Review Body.

The Government play no part in setting the levels of pay in the higher education and further education sectors as universities and further education colleges are independent and autonomous bodies. Pay levels are subject to negotiations between employers and the representative trade union bodies, and will therefore vary from institution to institution.

Top-up Fees

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under his proposed top-up fees plans, what the difference in take home pay would be between two graduates, one of whom had been liable to pay fees of £3,000 and the other of whom had not, at salary levels of *(a)* £15,000, *(b)* £25,000 and *(c)* £35,000. [153084]

Alan Johnson: Loan repayments do not depend on the level of fees charged to a student or their level of outstanding debt. They depend on their salary level after graduation, so there will be no difference in monthly take home pay between graduates who were liable for different levels of fees. Monthly repayments for a graduate on £15,000 will be zero; for a graduate on £25,000, they will be £75; and for a graduate on £35,000, they will be £150.

University Access

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the impact on the teaching budgets of higher education institutions of the creation of the access premium. [152781]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Funding for widening access and improving retention forms part of the teaching grants paid by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to higher education institutions. For the 2003–04 academic year, HEFCE allocated £3.4 billion of teaching funding, of which £265 million, including £10 million for disabled students, related specifically to widening access and improving retention. For 2004–05, HEFCE have recently announced that they will allocate some £3.8 billion in teaching funds, including £273 million for widening access and improving retention. HEFCE funding is provided as a block grant and it is for institutions to decide how to spend that money.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Harm Reduction

Mrs. Betty Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether health warnings on alcoholic drinks are being considered in the development of the National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy; and when the strategy will be published. [149348]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's strategy unit is currently developing the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England, which will be published shortly. The strategy unit is examining a range of interventions to combat health harms, including the placement of health warnings on alcoholic drinks containers, as part of the work on the development of the strategy.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers who have committed crimes in the UK in the last five years have been deported. [151270]

Beverley Hughes: The number of asylum seekers removed from the United Kingdom as a result of deportation action in each of the last five years for which information is available is given in the table.

Persons removed from the United Kingdom as a result of deportation action 1998 to 2002[1,2,3]

	Total	*of whom: principal asylum applicants*	*of whom: non-asylum cases*
1998	1,730	350	1,380
1999	1,210	140	1,075
2000	1,280	145	1,140
2001	450	85	365
2002[4]	415	100	315

[1] Under section 3(5) and 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1971.
[2] Figures for 2001 and 2002 have been estimated.
[3] Deportation figures may be under recorded in 1999 and 2000.
[4] Provisional figures.

The number of these who were removed after having committed a crime is not available except by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

We take very seriously any criminal or antisocial acts committed by asylum seekers. Although there is no evidence to suggest that asylum seekers are disproportionately likely to commit crime, we have taken powers in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to prevent serious criminals using the protection of the 1951 Refugee Convention. We will seek to remove such criminals from the United Kingdom wherever possible.

Civil Servants (Disabled People)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out the number of employees in his Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148994]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested for the Home Office (excluding Prison Service and the UK Passport Agency) is in the table.

Type of disability	*Number of staff*[1]
Non-disabled	18,500
Hearing impairment	50
Visual impairment	30
Mobility impairment	70
Physical coordination difficulties	40
Reduced physical capacity	110
Learning difficulties	20
Mental illness	20
Unknown disability	50
Speech impairment	[2]
Hearing impairment plus[3]	—
Visual impairment plus	—
Speech impairment plus	—
Mobility impairment plus	10
Physical co-ordination difficulties plus	10
Reduced physical capacity plus	40
Mental illness plus	10
Status unknown	250
Total Home Office staff[4]	19,210

[1] Provided from Mandate Data as at 1 April 2003. The data from Mandate incorporate information on 98 per cent. civil servants. Therefore, any analysis that comes from Mandate will not cover the complete population of civil servants and will not always reconcile with the data that are in the public domain.
[2] Less than 10.
[3] In combination with one or more disabilities.
[4] Including Forensic Science Service.
Note:
The number of staff in post and the number of disabled staff have been rounded to the nearest 10, and numbers under five are not disclosed in order to protect the privacy of the individual.

A Home Office Staff Survey undertaken in 2001 showed that 5 per cent. of respondents were declaring a disability against a declared level of 2.3 per cent. staff with a disability recorded on their personal record at that time. However, the declaration of disability is a voluntary matter and the Department is exploring ways of persuading staff of the value of declaring their disability. The Department participates in the Cabinet Office Disability Bursary Scheme, designed for staff with potential for early promotion to the senior civil service, the Cabinet Office summer placement scheme for disabled graduates and is a member of the Cabinet Office-chaired Disability Working Group, which is examining issues around disability monitoring and collection and the non-declaration of disability.

The Department has facilitated and resourced the establishment of the Home Office Disability Support network (HODS), to provide support and encouragement to staff with disabilities and advice to the Department about their needs. The Department is working with HODS to raise awareness and improve understanding of disability issues across the office, and to help realise the potential of disabled staff to rise to senior levels.

Crime Statistics

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what means he has achieved reductions in *(a)* burglary, *(b)* vehicle crime and *(c)* violent crime since 1997. [150127]

Ms Blears: We have instituted a large number of measures to reduce crime, many of which are listed in the Crime Reduction Strategy that we published in 1999. Some will have had an impact on a wide range of crimes, others are aimed specifically at burglary, vehicle crime and violent crime.

There are too many to list all in this reply, but examples include:

The activities of police forces and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to tackle local crime problems—for instance through making homes more secure, using local authority warden to warn car owners who leave valuables in their vehicles of the risks involved and tackling city centre hooliganism.

Working with all parts of the criminal justice systems to improve procedures and the effectiveness of sentencing.

The work of the Youth Justice Board and Youth Offending Teams.

Our anti-drug strategy including the work of the Drugs Actions Teams.

Increasing police numbers to a record 136,386.

Promoting partnership working—not just at a local level but also with a range of stakeholders such as other government departments, motor manufacturers and dealers, the insurance industry, local authorities, universities and student bodies and leading commercial brands.

Requiring crime reduction targets to be set, and instituting new methods of monitoring, managing and improving performance at local and national levels. In addition to measures such as the Police Reform Act and the Police Standards Unit we have been promoting problem-oriented and intelligence-led policing which tackle the problems and their causes in a more pro-active way.

Introducing new legislation and other powers such as minimum sentences for third time convictions for burglary; strengthening the law on rape; increasing the powers of courts to impose restraining orders in domestic violence cases; and regulation of the motor salvage industry.

There is still more that we can do and, for example:

We are starting some new work on reducing the market for stolen goods—i.e. making the disposal of stolen property more difficult, riskier and less profitable.

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit will be publishing an alcohol harm reduction strategy for England which will set out how to address the problems associated with alcohol misuse.

We are further improving vehicle registration procedures and working more closely with local authorities suffering the highest levels of crime and voluntary and community groups to get across vehicle crime prevention messages.

The Crime Reduction Delivery Board is finalising its prolific offenders strategy.

There are a number of other drivers of crime including social, economic and demographic factors and these will have contributed to the trends in crime in recent years.

Guns

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward legislation on the *(a)* sale, *(b)* promotion and *(c)* dissemination of (i) equipment and (ii) instructions for the re-conversion of guns that have previously been de-activated. [153098]

Caroline Flint: Component parts which can be used to re-activate firearms are already controlled in the same way as an actual firearm. Reamers, drills and other engineering tools are used for a variety of purposes and their sale is not restricted. It is already an offence, with a maximum sentence of seven years, to convert a de-activated firearm or to conspire to do so. Where the weapon converted is a prohibited firearm, anybody convicted of possessing such a weapon is liable to the new minimum sentence of five years and a maximum of 10 years.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to amend legislation relating to the *(a)* sale and *(b)* ownership of deactivated guns. [153100]

Caroline Flint: We have no plans at present to legislate in relation to the sale and ownership of de-activated weapons but we will be looking at this issue as part of the comprehensive review of current firearms legislation. We will be publishing a consultation paper shortly.

Hutton Report

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will investigate the premature disclosure of the Hutton Report. [152600]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

Following the disclosure of some of the conclusions contained in Lord Hutton's "Report of the Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death of Dr. David Kelly CMG" before its publication on 28 January, Lord Hutton set up his own investigation into the handling of all copies of the report prior to its publication.

Ministerial Security Costs

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of provision of security cover for ex-Ministers was in each of the last five years; and what the highest cost relating to any one ex-Minister since his or her retirement was. [152192]

Mr. Blunkett: We seek to ensure the most effective and efficient protective security arrangements for public figures in the light of the changing threat from terrorism and other continuing risks. It is not our policy to comment on the details of protection arrangements for individuals, as to do so could compromise their security.

An exercise has obviously been conducted in rearranging the particular level of threat to those no longer in post and arrangements have been made where this is judged to be appropriate based on the security threat to the individual concerned.

Police Recruitment

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on *(a)* the recruitment of police officers, *(b)* the recruitment of graduates to work as police officers and *(c)* the Accelerated Promotion scheme for graduate police officers. [152473]

Ms Blears: From 1 April 1997 till 31 March 2003 the following number of officers have been recruited:

	Number of officers
1997–98	6,543
1998–99	5,391
1999–2000	4,535
2000–01	7,415
2001–02	10,215
2002–03	13,126

We now have record police numbers of 136,386 as at 31 August 2003.

We do not currently collate the number of graduates recruited into the police service centrally and cannot therefore say how many graduates have been recruited. However, we have reason to believe that the Police Service continues to be an attractive career option for graduates. Since April 2003 we have been rolling out a new police assessment centre. So far 4,244 candidates have gone through this of which just under 25 per cent. were graduates or post graduates. The Accelerated Promotion Scheme for Graduates was replaced in April 2002 by the High Potential Development (HPD) scheme which recruits both graduates and non graduates, externally and from within forces, with the potential to reach at least superintendent rank and ensures that they are equipped with the necessary skills to become highly effective in middle management, command and leadership roles. The scheme provides a structured yet flexible career framework which can lead to the most senior positions in the police service. A high proportion of graduates are recruited onto the scheme which is actively marketed via university careers fairs, other graduate events and targeted marketing in graduate publications and literature placed in universities. Latest statistics show that 50 (67 per cent.) of those successful in gaining a place on the scheme are graduates on application.

Police Statistics (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* arrests, *(b)* people charged, *(c)* cautions issued and *(d)* convictions there were in Wales, broken down by (i) police force, (ii) constituency and (iii) local authority area in each year since 1997. [151732]

Ms Blears: The available information, relating to persons arrested in Wales, by police force area, is contained in Table A. It is limited to arrests for notifiable offences and relates to the financial years, 1999–2000 to 2002–03.

The number of persons cautioned, proceeded against at the magistrates courts (numbers of persons charged are not held centrally) and found guilty at all courts for all offences, in Wales, by police force area, 1997 to 2002 is contained in Table B.

Statistics on cautions and court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the Autumn.

Table A: Persons arrested for notifiable offences recorded by the police, by police force area, Wales, 1999–2000 to 2002–03

Police force area	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Dyfed-Powys	14,057	13,036	12,217	13,219
Gwent	27,829	24,642	20,757	14,753
North Wales	12,653	14,843	14,928	17,214
South Wales	n/a	34,838	36,295	37,216
Wales	[1]88,300	87,359	84,197	82,402

[1] Estimated.
n/a = not available

Table B: Number of persons cautioned, proceeded against at the magistrates' courts and found guilty at all courts for all offences by police force area, Wales 1997 to 2002[1]

Year/police force area	*Cautioned*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
1997			
Dyfed-Powys	3,109	18,538	13,464
Gwent	5,329	27,038	21,128
North Wales	3,074	22,051	16,372
South Wales	6,868	59,389	42,613
Total	18,380	127,016	93,577
1998			
Dyfed-Powys	3,452	18,839	14,066
Gwent	5,780	29,648	23,712
North Wales	3,544	21,515	16,829
South Wales	6,339	63,457	45,429
Total	19,115	133,459	100,036
1999			
Dyfed-Powys	3,313	18,790	13,695
Gwent	5,502	29,053	23,271
North Wales	3,619	20,617	16,053
South Wales	5,852	57,881	41,658
Total	18,286	126,341	94,677
2000			
Dyfed-Powys	3,185	18,186	13,241
Gwent	4,529	27,365	21,406
North Wales	3,124	21,446	17,649
South Wales	5,399	57,478	41,649
Total	16,237	124,475	93,302
2001			
Dyfed-Powys	3,495	16,374	11,908
Gwent	4,258	26,158	20,131
North Wales	3,120	21,199	16,398
South Wales	4,826	53,042	37,720
Total	15,699	116,773	86,157
2002			
Dyfed-Powys	3,761	17,572	12,796
Gwent	3,803	25,523	20,218
North Wales	3,558	25,166	19,471
South Wales	3,680	57,282	40,513
Total	14,802	125,543	92,998

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

Policing Consultation Documents

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those individuals and organisations to whom *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its executive agencies and *(c)* the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department are responsible sent a copy of the consultations documents (i) National Policing Plan 2004 -07 and (ii) Policing: Building Safer Communities Together. [152456]

Ms Blears: The lists record the individuals and organisations to whom the National Policing Plan 2004–07 and the "Policing: Building Safer Communities Together" were sent, and, this list will be placed in the Library.

It was then a decision for these bodies as to whether the documents were distributed further within their organisations and to their stakeholders. Both documents also appear on the Home Office website at www.policereform.gov.uk.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the members of the *(a)* Advisory Board on Restricted Patients, *(b)* Commission for Racial Equality, *(c)* Gaming Board for Great Britain, *(d)* Health Advisory Committee to the Prison Service and *(e)* Horserace Betting Levy Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151811]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is as follows.

1. Advisory Board on Restricted Patients ceased to function with effect from 16 September 2003.

2. Gaming Board for Great Britain— is the responsibility of the Department for Culture, Media and Sports

3. Horserace Betting Levy Board— is the responsibility of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

4. Health Advisory Committee to the Prison Service

The Health Advisory Committee for the Prison Service was abolished as a consequence of the decision, announced in March 1999, to reorganise prison health care on the basis of a partnership between the Prison and National Health Services. The table lists the Commission for Racial Equality on 1 January.

Commission for Racial Equality

Chair	1 March 2003–28 February 2007	Phillips, Trevor	Remunerated
Deputy Chair/Commissioner	1 April 2002–31 March 2006	Hampton, Kay	Remunerated
Deputy Chair/Commissioner	1 April 2002–31 March 2006	Spencer, Sarah	Remunerated
Commissioner	1 April 2002–31 March 2006	Barr, Ian	Remunerated
Commissioner	1 March 2002–31 March 2006	Ahmed, Khurshid	Remunerated
Commissioner	1 April 2002–31 March 2006	Gundara, Jagdish	Remunerated
Commissioner	1 April 2002–31 March 2006	Mills, Gloria	Remunerated
Commissioner	1 June 2000–31 May 2004	Jandu, Kamaljeet	Remunerated
Commissioner	1 April 2002–31 March 2006	Short, Cherry	Remunerated
Commissioner	1 July 2003–31 March 2004	Jones, Digby	Remunerated

Terrorism Act

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 268W, on the Terrorism Act 2000, what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the ethnic origin of the individuals who have been stopped and searched under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000. [152399]

Mr. Blunkett: No independent research has been commissioned by the Home Office on the ethnic origin of the individuals who have been stopped and searched under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

Neither is the data routinely collected on stops and searches made under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 automatically cross-referenced with data on the ethnic origin of those stopped. This information could only be collated and verified at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 268W, on the Terrorism Act 2000, how many *(a)* arrests and *(b)* prosecutions have directly resulted from stop and searches carried out under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 in (i) 2001–02 and (ii) 2002–03. [152400]

Mr. Blunkett: The table gives details of stops and searches under section 44(1) and 44(2) of the Terrorism Act 2000 and resultant arrests.

Year	*Total searches*	*Resultant arrests*
(i) 2001–02	10,200	189
(ii) 2002–03	32,100	380

This information is taken from the Home Office Statistical Bulletin Arrests for Notifiable Offences and the Operation of Certain Police Powers under PACE. England and Wales 2002–03.

Data collected on stops and searches are not routinely cross-referenced with the data held on prosecutions. This information could be collated and verified only at disproportionate cost.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which armoured vehicles are used by British patrols in Afghanistan. [152375]

Mr. Ingram: Where and when assessed as necessary UK forces in Kabul use SAXON light armoured vehicles.

Army Redundancies

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what instructions have been given to Army commanding officers on identifying individuals who may no longer be regarded as necessary by their units. [152221]

Mr. Ingram: Generally the Army uses the Manning Control Point review process to identify soldiers who may not be required for a full Army career. No discharge action has been taken under this process since 2002 and no further reviews are currently planned. Commanding Officers have been told that individuals

who have already given notice to terminate their engagement before 30 September 2004 may be allowed to leave without serving their full notice period, if they wish to do so and they can be spared by their unit.

David Kelly

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the name of each individual who contacted Dr David Kelly by *(a)* telephone and *(b)* e-mail on 17 July 2003, indicating the time of contact, and broken down by (i) MOD and other Government personnel, (ii) press and (iii) others; and if he will make a statement. [152931]

Mr. Hoon: The only Ministry of Defence or Government personnel known to have contacted Dr. Kelly on 17 July 2003 were his colleagues from the Counter- Proliferation and Arms Control directorate in the MOD. These contacts were detailed in Lord Hutton's report and in the evidence of the individuals concerned.

Lord Hutton has included in his report or made available on the internet such details of those others who contacted Dr. Kelly as he thought appropriate.

Driver Training

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces undertook *(a)* training to drive and *(b)* driving tests in the last 12 months. [152304]

Mr. Ingram: Information on the number of armed forces personnel, who undertook training to drive in the past 12 months, is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

The total number of individuals who took driving tests in the period 1 January to 31 December 2003 was:

	Number
Individuals	22,071
Passes	40,974
Fails	19,516
Tests taken	60,584

Note:
Most individuals will have undertaken a number of theory and practical tests during the period. The total number of individuals is therefore less than the sum of those undertaking each type of test.

The number who took practical driving tests in the period 1 January to 31 December 2003 was as follows:

	Number
Individuals	17,145
Passes	24,982
Fails	13,422
Tests taken	38,460

The number who took theory driving tests in the period 1 January to 31 December 2003 was as follows.

	Number
Individuals	15,300
Passes	15,992
Fails	6,094
Tests taken	22,124

Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Charles Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what regulations govern the discharge of coolants from nuclear submarines in British waters, with particular regard to distance from shore; and what procedures are used to ensure that these regulations are adhered to, with particular reference to radioactivity of the discharged coolant; and if he will make a statement. [152754]

Mr. Ingram: The Radioactive Substances Act (1993) (RSA(93)) governs the accumulation, use and disposal of radioactive materials. Discharges within the 12-mile limit or within known fishing grounds are permitted only for safety or operational reasons, and only if activity levels are below statutory limits. While specifically exempted from the provisions of the Act, the Secretary of State for Defence continues to comply voluntarily with RSA (93) when controlling discharges of primary coolant from RN nuclear submarines.

Operation Telic

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) protection filters were fitted to the FV432 series vehicles in Operation Telic; and how many vehicles had NBC protection. [153045]

Mr. Ingram: The FV 432 vehicle is not fitted with a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) air filtration system. In the event that protection is needed, the crew rely on their individual protection.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Vale of York for answer on 12 January regarding a breach of security at RAF Leeming, refs 147075–7. [152074]

Mr. Ingram: I replied to the hon. Member on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 889–90W.

Private Kitulagoda

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether Private Kitulagoda of the Rifle Volunteers was a member of the Civil Contingencies Reaction Force; [153051]

(2) how many members of the Rifle Volunteers who are currently deployed to Afghanistan are members of the Civil Contingencies Reaction Force. [153052]

Mr. Ingram: Private Kitulagoda, of the Rifle Volunteers, who was sadly killed on 28 January 2004 while on duty in Afghanistan, was a member of the Civil Contingency Reaction Force.

All members of the Rifle Volunteers are part of the 43 (Wessex) Brigade Civil Contingency Reaction Force, and 46 members of the unit are currently deployed in Afghanistan.

Despite the absence of these individuals on operations we retain the necessary capability for the CCRFs to meet any role required of them.

RAF Marham

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what hours of the day the bird-scarer at RAF Marham operates; and whether those hours have changed in the last five years. [152457]

Mr. Ingram: The Bird Control Unit (ECU) at RAF Marham operates within standard Station flying hours 0800–0000 Monday to Thursday, 0800–1800 on Fridays. These hours have not changed in the last five years. Additionally the BCU operates to meet any operational requirements outside standard hours.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many incidents of bird-strike occurred at RAF Marham in each of the last seven years. [152458]

Mr. Ingram: In the past seven years the following number of bird-strikes have been recorded at RAF Marham:

	Number
1997	1
1998	3
1999	2
2000	5
2001	6
2002	2
2003	6

Work Strands

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many work strands have been established by his Department; what subject areas each strand will cover; what savings have to be identified in each work strand; and if he will make a statement. [152926]

Mr. Ingram: As part of the Ministry of Defence's annual planning round, 16 work strands have been established to conduct a thorough examination of defence costs and capabilities. Each work strand will explore aspects of military capability and/or associated overheads with a view to identifying options for re-balancing the Defence Programme. This work will take place within the policy context set out in the Defence White Paper: Delivering Security in a Changing World. Financial savings targets have not been set for individual work strands.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Iran

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department is offering for the reconstruction effort in Bam, Iran, in the aftermath of the earthquake. [152529]

Hilary Benn: Following our immediate support to the emergency phase of the Bam earthquake response, we have committed a further £2 million towards the rehabilitation effort.

This additional support is focused on the restoration of primary health care services in partnership with the World Health Organisation (£0.5 million); the implementation of a mid-term sanitation programme in partnership with the United Nations children's agency, UNICEF (£0.5 million); the restoration of agricultural based livelihoods, focusing on the rehabilitation of wells and procurement of pumps, livestock restocking and the replacement of agricultural tools in a joint United Nations Development Programme—Food and Agricultural Organisation partnership (£0.25 million) and also through the non-governmental organisation Action Contre La Faim (£0.3 million); and further support to the International Federation of the Red Cross's appeal (£0.45 million), including the re-stocking of relief items, continued provision of emergency medical services and capacity building of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

The UK's overall support since the earthquake is £2.95 million, including the UK share of European Community commitments. The European Commission is expected to shortly announce a package of support to the rehabilitation effort. The UK share of this additional commitment would increase our overall support to around £3.7 million.

Iraq

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1297W, on Iraq, if he will break down the expenditure by *(a)* secondment, *(b)* consultant and *(c)* security measure. [153133]

Hilary Benn: The breakdowns are as follows:

	£
(a) CPA Director of Infrastructure and support staff	150,000
Deployments to the region by DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Dept (CHAD)	1,287,000
Secondments to UN	536,000
DFID staff secondments to Iraq	80,000
Total	2,053,000
(b) DFID consultants (on-going programme)	1,360,000
Consultants for Essential Services in Southern Iraq	46,000
Recovery and Infrastructure Group	2,500,000
Governorate Offices	1,895,000
Emergency Infrastructure Programme	500,000
Total	6,301,000
(c) Close protection services to CPA(S)	4,384,000
Close protection/security equipment for consultancy teams	1,614,000
Security equipment (incl. Armoured Vehicles)	5,445,000
Total	11,443,000

Nigeria

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid his Department will give Nigeria in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [152850]

Hilary Benn: DFID's development assistance to Nigeria for 2003–04 is £35 million and for 2004–05 will be £43 million. In addition, I recently announced an extra £15 million for Nigeria's programme of civil service reform.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Jobs (Relocation)

Mr. Peter Duncan: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many Civil Service jobs have been relocated to Dumfries and Galloway since 1997. [145680]

Mr. Alexander: The information is not available in the form requested. Data are available on the number of Civil Service jobs in Scotland as a whole, although it is not possible to separate changes resulting from the relocation of existing work from changes due to new work arising and old jobs disappearing.

Detailed civil service Statistics for UK Departments are available at www.civil-service.for.uk/statistics.

I understand that the Scottish Executive is committed to the dispersal of public sector jobs and that as a result of this policy around 1,250 posts have been and plan to be located out with Edinburgh and that further 1,950 are covered by planned location reviews.

Government Vehicles

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what proportion of official Government vehicles are fitted to run on liquid petroleum gas. [151292]

Mr. Alexander: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government and Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr. Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in his Department. [150929]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office and its agencies (the Central Office of Information and the Government Car and Despatch Agency), use formal processes and procedures to ensure that all official IT hardware and software is used properly.

The Department maintains asset registers and service statistics, and undertake regular checks on these using both electronic and manual methods. We have controls in place to guarantee that approved software and hardware products only are used on official systems, and that they are sourced and supported through approved channels. The Department also use systems to manage and monitor access to Internet services, to secure the effective day-to-day operation of IT, and for other lawful purposes.

The Cabinet Office Management Code informs staff on the rules and guidelines covering the use of electronic communications facilities, and highlights the consequences of non-compliance.

Procurement (Outsourcing)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the Department's procurement policy with regard to offshore IT and call centre outsourcing; whether the Department is outsourcing IT and call centre jobs to offshore companies; to which countries the Department has outsourced these jobs; how much the Department has spent on outsourcing in each of the last two years; and how much has been budgeted for this purpose for the next two years. [147577]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office's procurement policy is based on value for money with due regard to propriety and regularity, including the EU Treaty and the UK's international obligations.

The Department does not have a specific procurement policy with regard to offshore IT and call centre outsourcing. The Cabinet Office has outsourced a number of IT contracts over the last two years and I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Mr. Flight) on 6 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 998–99 for a list of all such contracts signed by my department since 1997. All of these were to companies based in the UK. To establish the sub-contracting arrangements of these companies would incur disproportionate costs.

Public Services Audit

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 72W, on public services audit, for what reasons the contents of the Cabinet Office paper were revealed to Rosemary Bennett of *The Times* newspaper. [152453]

Mr. Alexander: There was no authorised official briefing to Rosemary Bennett of *The Times* newspaper.

It is not Government policy to comment on reports in the media that are not from authorised briefing.

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) his Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147985]

Mr. Alexander: The number of security passes lost or stolen between January and December 2003 are:

	Lost	*Stolen*
Cabinet Office	49	7
Cabinet Office Agencies	12	3

My Department assesses all cases of lost and stolen passes to determine any increased vulnerability to security. Additional controls and procedures are introduced as necessary.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [150429]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten) today.

WALES

Easements

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will introduce legislation to create an exemption from easements for private home owners who require vehicular access across common land to access their homes. [152346]

Mr. Hain: Under section 68 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, a home owner can acquire a right of way over common land to gain access to their home. The section is to be brought into force by the National Assembly for Wales in early February. The Government have no plans to introduce further legislation on this subject.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Learning to Listen Initiative

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of marketing his Department's Learning to Listen to Young People initiative will be. [153085]

Yvette Cooper: Marketing of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Learning to Listen competition cost £2,333.75. This was for the production and printing of the leaflet. This has been the only marketing activity to date and there are no existing plans for other further marketing activities that would have a cost implication.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of his Department's Learning to Listen to Young People initiative will be; and if he will make a statement. [153086]

Yvette Cooper: The costs are as follows:

	£
Salaries from March 2003-April 2004	34,969.02
Competition leaflet production	2,333.75
Competition winners event and exhibition	[1]6,000
Total	43,302.77

[1] Predicted expenditure.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many officials in his Department have been assigned to work on the Learning to Listen to Young People initiative. [153087]

Yvette Cooper: There is one lead official (currently a secondee from the Voluntary sector) assigned to work on the Learning to Listen action plan full-time. Other officials across the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister contribute through a departmental steering group that meets quarterly.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how his Department will take account of the views expressed by young people through the Learning to Listen to Young People initiative. [153088]

Yvette Cooper: The Learning to Listen initiative aims to involve children and young people in shaping the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policy design and delivery. As such this is an on-going activity and all policy areas are examining how they can engage with children and young people more effectively as their stakeholders.

In November 2003 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister launched a competition for young people to suggest the most appropriate way for them to become actively involved in the work of the Department. The winner and short listed youth groups will be invited to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to explore their ideas further with relevant policy leads. There will also be an in-house exhibition of the competition entries.

All of the views expressed by the young people in the competition will be forwarded onto the relevant Office of the Deputy Prime Minister policy areas. The young people will be provided with feedback on any changes that occur as a result of their suggestions.

Light Pollution

Ross Cranston: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on the control of light pollution. [152983]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policy on planning control and light pollution has long been that such issues are most appropriately dealt with by: raising awareness by those who buy and procure external lighting of the consequences of badly installed lighting; providing guidance on how those problems might be mitigated; and encouraging more effective use of existing planning powers.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also intends to provide an annex to Planning Policy Statement 23, Planning and Pollution Control, specifically on light pollution. This will send a clear signal to local planning authorities that they should take the issue of light pollution as seriously as they do other types of pollution when considering planning applications.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will reduce the safety limit of 58 V/m for mobile phone and Tetra masts to the European limit of 0.002 V/m to 6 V/m; [152298]

(2) if he will amend safety limits on mobile phone masts to cover non-thermal influences; [152299]

(3) what assessment he has made of the latest evidence on the possible risks to health of mobile phone masts; and if he will take steps to bring UK safety measures into line with best practice in other European countries. [152305]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

The Government, along with other European Union member states, have adopted the exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) as expressed in the 1999 European Council Recommendation 519/EC/1999. All mobile phone base stations and handsets should comply with these guidelines.

The Stewart Report on "Mobile Phones and Health" in May 2000 (www.iegmp.org.uk) included the following conclusions on base stations:

"the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guidelines."

Further reduction of guidelines was considered by the Stewart Group but this was rejected, as there was "no scientific basis" for it.

A review of recent research, entitled, "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields", published in January 2004 by the National Radiological Protection Board's (NRPB) Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation, came to similar conclusions:

"Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health."

In the last three years the Radiocommunications Agency (RA), now part of Ofcom, has carried out and published radio frequency exposure level measurements near base station sites. The data show that exposure to signals from masts at locations accessible to the general public is very low compared with guideline levels advised by the ICNIRP (www.ofcom.org.uk).

The NRPB has the statutory responsibility for advising the Government on exposure guidelines for electromagnetic fields (EMFs). They issued a consultation document last year, in which they proposed new advice on exposure guidelines for all EMFs comparable with the international guidelines. Publication of the new NRPB guidelines is expected this spring.

I wrote to all right hon. and hon. Members on 21 January with a summary of the current position relating to mobile phone technology and health concerns.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Age Discrimination

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his policy on tackling age discrimination in Northern Ireland. [152592]

Mr. Spellar: Consultation on proposals for legislation which will tackle age discrimination in employment and training in line with the requirements of the EU Employment Framework Directive ended on 23 January 2004.

Draft regulations will be developed in the light of responses to this consultation and further consultation on these regulations will then take place. The legislation will come into force in late 2006 to comply with the Directive. Guidance will be developed and published when the regulations have been made giving employers time to complete preparations for their new obligations, and it will allow individuals to familiarise themselves with their new rights.

Policy development is continuing within the context of the single Equality Bill, on extending protection for the age ground to the provision of goods, facilities and services. A consultation on the single Equality Bill is planned for this year.

Children's Commissioner

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the work of the Children's Commissioner in Northern Ireland. [152590]

Mr. Spellar: Mr. Nigel Williams was appointed as the first Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland on 1 October 2003. His powers and duties, as an independent champion for children and young people, are set out in the Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. This legislation establishes the primary aim of the commissioner which is to

'safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people'.

In the period since his appointment, the commissioner has met with children and young people throughout Northern Ireland to listen to their concerns. He has also engaged with political representatives, and statutory, voluntary and community organisations dealing with children and young people's issues.

He has already established a unique identity and branding with a dedicated interactive website, www.niccy.org, and has begun the process of recruiting his staff team, with the involvement of young people. He has also commissioned a base-line study into how Northern Ireland is implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Drugs Treatment

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to increase the number of specialist beds in the Province for the treatment of patients with drug addictions; and if he will make a statement. [152365]

Angela Smith: There are no plans at present to expand the number of specialist beds for the treatment of patients with drug addictions. However, the services for problem drug users, including the provision of specialist beds, will continue to be assessed. An independent review of mental health and learning disability policy, services and legislation has been established and part of its remit involves looking at the services available to problem drug users.

Education and Library Board Transition Plan

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what opportunity is available to parents of young people with moderate learning disabilities to comment on the Education and Library Board Transition Plan. [152234]

Jane Kennedy: In accordance with the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, an Education and Library Board is required to produce a Transition Plan at the first (and subsequent) Annual Review of the statement of Special Educational Needs following the young person's

14th birthday. The Transition Plan draws together information from a variety of sources, including the young person, his/her parents, the school and any other professionals involved with the young person.

Parents of young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are routinely invited to transition planning meetings in schools to discuss key issues relating to the young person's SEN. Parents are invited to comment during the meeting and to contribute actively to the transition planning process.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how *(a)* parents and *(b)* others may appeal the provisions contained in the Education and Library Board Transition Plan. [152235]

Jane Kennedy: Transition Plans are reviewed and updated on an annual basis following the young person's statutory Annual Review of a Statement of Special Educational Needs. When Transition Plans are written there is every opportunity for parents, the young person and others to have their opinion noted and the Education and Library Board will endeavour to resolve any difficulties identified. Within existing legislation there is no provision for a formal appeal specifically of the Transition Plan. If, however, as a result of the Annual Review, the Education and Library Board amends the educational provision contained in the Statement of Special Educational Needs, the parent has the normal right of appeal to the SEN Tribunal, if he/she is in disagreement with the provision.

Fair Employment Legislation

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what employees are exempt from fair employment legislation in Northern Ireland; and for what reason they are exempt. [152586]

Mr. Spellar: The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 as amended by the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 provides for the following exemptions in respect of employees:

(i) any employment or occupation as a clergyman or minister of a religious denomination;

(ii) any employment or occupation where the essential nature of the job requires it to be done by a person holding, or not holding a particular religious belief or political opinion.

The legislation recognises that there are particular jobs where it may be necessary for a person carrying out that work to be of a particular religious belief or political opinion.

Government Solicitors

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether solicitors have been retained to draft legislation in respect of the Single Equality Bill. [152215]

Mr. Spellar: No. Assembly Bills introduced by the Northern Ireland Executive during devolution and Orders in Council made under the Northern Ireland Act 2000 while the Assembly is suspended are drafted by the Office of the Legislative Counsel of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. A panel of experts, who are legal and academic specialists, was set up in February 2003 to provide advice to assist in the policy development process.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the longest period is that an individual has been waiting for *(a)* in-patient admission and *(b)* initial out-patient assessment in orthopaedic surgery. [152366]

Angela Smith: Information from health trusts in Northern Ireland indicates that, at the end of December 2003, the longest time an individual has been waiting for in-patient admission to the trauma and orthopaedics specialty is 2,808 days, and the longest time for an initial out-patient appointment is 3,485 days.

It should be noted, however, that over 80 per cent. of in-patients for trauma and orthopaedics and 90 per cent. of out-patients are seen in less than 12 months.

Learning Difficulties

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the terms of reference are of the working group chaired by the Department of Education to consider future provision for the needs of young people with moderate learning difficulties; and if he will place a copy of them in the Library. [152141]

Jane Kennedy: The Department of Education does not chair a group to consider future provision for the needs of young people specifically with moderate learning difficulties. It does, however, chair an Inter Departmental Working Group (IDG) that is looking at the Transition of young people with statements of special educational needs to adult life.

The remit of the IDG is:

To consider gaps in the process of transition from school (mainstream and special) for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs;

To address these gaps by considering needs and best practice in the area; and

To formulate proposals for additional resources in relation to the transitions planning process through to post-school provision in employment, further education and training and day care.

A copy of the above has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Northern Ireland Departments are represented on the working group chaired by the Department of Education to consider provision for the future needs of young people with moderate learning difficulties; how many times the working group has met; and from whom the group has taken evidence. [152142]

Jane Kennedy: The Department of Education does not chair a group to consider future provision for the needs of young people specifically with moderate learning difficulties. It does, however, chair an inter-departmental working group (IDG) that is looking at the transition of young people with statements of special educational needs to adult life.

The IDG on transitions consists of representatives from the Departments of Education, Employment and Learning, and Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and at one meeting representatives from the Social Security Agency were co-opted for advice. The IDG has met on seven occasions and has taken advice from a range of interests including the Education and Library Boards, the Education and Training Inspectorate, a number of schools and parents groups, a community Health and Social Services Trust, the Carers Forum, a cross section of voluntary groups and an MLA with a special interest in the transitions process.

Post-primary Education

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of how the proposed new Northern Ireland post-primary education system will affect current schooling arrangements under the Craigavon-Dixon scheme. [152124]

Jane Kennedy: The Government's decisions are not imposing a 'one size fits all' system. All existing school types, including Dickson plan schools, have a place in the new arrangements, provided they meet the requirements of the Entitlement Framework. Academic selection will end and new transfer arrangements will be based on informed pupil and parental choice.

Rates Relief

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many people are eligible to receive rates relief, broken down by parliamentary constituency; [152093]

(2) how many pensioners *(a)* applied for rates relief and *(b)* were successful in their application in each of the last five years, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [152094]

Mr. Pearson: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Rate Collection Agency to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

Recruitment Advertising

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on recruitment advertisements in the press, broken down by publication, by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* quangos under the Department and *(c)* non-departmental Government bodies under the Department (i) in the last year and (ii) since 1997. [145806]

Mr. Pearson: Expenditure by the Recruitment Service on advertising in relation to appointments to the Northern Ireland civil service is as follows:

2003: £0.5 million

1998–2002: £1.8 million

The Recruitment Service uses the most appropriate publication for recruitment advertising (normally the regional press), depending on the nature of the vacancy to be filled.

Other information in the form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Disability Discrimination Bill

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) on what basis *(a)* HIV, *(b)* cancer and *(c)* multiple sclerosis were included in the draft Disability Discrimination Bill's definitions of disability; and if he will make a statement; [152568]

(2) on what basis *(a)* restricted growth conditions, *(b)* mental ill health and *(c)* high functioning autism were excluded from the draft Disability Discrimination Bill's definitions of disability; and if he will make a statement. [152569]

Maria Eagle: Anyone with a restricted growth condition, mental ill health or high functioning autism who meets the current definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is treated as a disabled person for the purposes of the Act and is entitled to protection against disability discrimination. A disabled person is defined in section 1 of the Act as a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

In the particular case of people with progressive conditions (such as HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis), the current definition treats them as disabled if their impairment has some effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, even if not substantial, provided that it is eventually likely to have that effect.

We propose through the definition of disability clause in the draft Disability Discrimination Bill to extend the current definition of disability in the Act for the progressive conditions of HIV infection, cancer and multiple sclerosis to anyone who has that condition whether or not it has an effect on normal day-to-day activities; although there is a power which could be used to exclude cancers which do not require substantial treatment. The provisions relating to HIV infection and cancer follow recommendations by the Disability Rights Task Force. The extension for multiple sclerosis followed consideration of case law. No conditions already covered by the 1995 Act would be excluded by means of the draft Disability Discrimination Bill.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of attendance allowance claimants in England who would no longer qualify for this benefit if they were being given free personal care; and what estimate he has made of the consequent saving to his Department. [152835]

Maria Eagle: Data from which such estimates could be derived are not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Benefit Fraud

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were successfully prosecuted in Scotland for *(a)* housing benefit, *(b)* income support, *(c)* council tax benefit and *(d)* jobseeker's allowance fraud in each of the last five years. [147829]

Mr. Pond: The available information is in the table:

Number of successful benefit fraud prosecutions in Scotland

	[1]DSS/DWP Agencies	[2]Local authority
1998–99	598	NA
1999–2000	494	NA
2000–01	510	NA
2001–02	503	23
2002–03	486	73

[1] Fraud Information by Sector system

[2] Local authority subsidy returns

Note:

1. The DSS/DWP figures refer to prosecutions undertaken specifically by the Counter Fraud Investigation Services in Scotland. These figures cannot be broken down separately into individual benefits and include successful prosecutions for all benefits paid by the Department, including Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance. Figures relating to prosecutions carried out in Scotland by the National Investigation Service can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

2. The local authority figures are for successful prosecutions carried out by local authorities in Scotland in respect of Housing Benefit fraud and Council Tax Benefit fraud.

3. Information on the number of people successfully prosecuted by local authorities in Scotland is available only as a total figure for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and can not be provided separately.

4. For figures prior to 1999–2000, the Fraud Information by Sector database shows completed cases commenced in the relevant period. Due to the elapsed time between commencement of an investigation and completion of a prosecution there are cases which are inserted into previously completed data for earlier periods. All totals are therefore correct at the time when quoted but subject to adjustment at a later date.

5. Reliable information for local authority prosecutions in Scotland is not available for 1998–99 to 2000–01.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many whole time equivalent staff were employed by his Department on anti-benefit fraud programmes in each of the last six years; what the operational costs were in each of those years; how much additional benefit was recovered in each case; and what the unit cost ratio of cost to benefit was in each case. [151016]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available.

The overall aim of the Department's anti-fraud strategy is to have a benefit system which is secure from first claim to final payment. The implementation of this strategy means that an anti-fraud focus is integral to the work of all staff in the Department, as is dealing with the wider agenda of error and incorrectness in benefit payments. It is therefore not possible to account for the cost of anti-fraud work separately.

The information currently available shows that around 5,000 staff are employed nationally at any one time by the Department and its agencies in work to investigate suspicions of fraud.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many calls have been received by the National Benefit Fraud Hotline in each of the last six years; and how many *(a)* investigations, *(b)* prosecutions and *(c)* convictions have resulted. [151018]

Mr. Pond: The available information is in the table.

National Benefit Fraud Hotline

	Number of calls received	Investigations	Prosecutions	Convictions
April 1997–March 1998	188,038	n/a	n/a	n/a
April 1998–March 1999	170,032	n/a	n/a	n/a
April 1999–March 2000	162,067	31,686	376	335
April 2000–March 2001	208,201	35,637	542	492
April 2001–March 2002	205,999	40,447	768	703
April 2002–March 2003	159,290	33,700	780	706

Notes:

Full information on the number of successful investigations, prosecutions and convictions resulting from calls to the National Benefit Fraud Hotline is available only from April 1999.

Source:

National Benefit Fraud Hotline and Fraud Information by Sector system

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff have been employed to investigate internal fraud within his Department in each of the last six years. [151021]

Mr. Pond: The Department for Work and Pensions was created following a machinery of Government change in June 2001 by a merger of Department of Social Security and parts of the Department for Education and Employment and the Employment Service. Staff numbers involved in internal fraud investigations prior to June 2001 is now no longer available.

Between July 2001 and March 2003, internal fraud investigations were undertaken by regionally based staff. In some instances these were dedicated staff, in others there was a panel of investigators called upon as and when required. The information on the number of staff involved in investigations during this period is not now available.

From the 1 April 2003 it was decided that all internal fraud investigations would be undertaken by an independent team managed by the Director of Internal Assurance. Currently there are 66 full-time investigators and support staff undertaking this work.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions the additional powers to obtain information from specified private and public sector organisations to tackle benefit fraud and error introduced by the Social Security Fraud Act 2001 have been used in each year since the powers took effect; and if he will list the organisations which *(a)* were asked to provide information and *(b)* supplied information. [151022]

Mr. Pond: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Disability Living Allowance

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints per thousand disability living allowance examinations were received by each disability benefit centre in the last 12 months, listed in descending order. [152792]

Maria Eagle: All complaints relating to disability living allowance medical examinations are recorded and investigated by Medical Services. The numbers of complaints Medical Services received per thousand DLA/AA examinations for the period December 2002 to November 2003, carried out for the disability benefit centres listed, are set out in the table.

Location	*Number of examinations*[1]	*Number of complaints*	*Complaints per thousand*
Leeds	26,904	244	9.1
Birmingham	30,770	274	8.9
Manchester	17,478	148	8.5
Newcastle	13,657	106	7.8
Sutton	17,209	134	7.8
Bootle	16,384	125	7.6
Bristol	12,442	88	7.1
Glasgow	13,969	96	6.9
Wembley	29,532	144	4.9
Edinburgh	11,366	49	4.3
Cardiff	15,302	65	4.2

[1] The numbers of examinations include examinations carried out for both DLA and AA. Figures are not available which differentiate between the two benefits.

Source:

Medical Services report to Medical Procurement and Contracting Team

Incapacity Benefit Appeals

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in how many incapacity benefit appeal cases processed by the social security office in Dundee in the last year it has taken more than three weeks to obtain a full statement of reasons from the Appeals Service, Glasgow; and what percentage of the total cases dealt with in that period this represents. [148748]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Annabelle Ewing, dated 5 February 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking in how many incapacity benefit appeal cases processed by the social security office in Dundee in the last year has it taken more than 3 weeks to obtain a full statement of reasons from the Appeals Service, Glasgow; and what percentage of the total cases dealt within that period this represents

The information is not available in the requested format. However in respect of the period 1 December 2002 to 30 November 2003, out of a total of 955 statement of reasons issued by the Appeals Service office in Glasgow in respect of Incapacity Benefit appeals, 740 were issued after 15 working days, which is 77.5 per cent. of the total. In respect of the Dundee tribunal venue out of a total of 72 statement of reasons issued over the same period, 51 were issued after 15 working days, which is 71 per cent. of the total.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Statements for incapacity benefit appeals at Dundee (1 December 2002 to 30 November 2003)

	Less than 15 days	*Between 15 and 20 days*	*Between 20 and 25 days*	*Between 25 and 30 days*	*Greater than 30 days*	*Total*
Dundee	21	12	11	5	23	72
Glasgow	215	101	87	97	455	955

Invalid Care Allowance

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many carers aged 65 years and over are receiving invalid care allowance. [152758]

Maria Eagle: As at 31 August 2003, an estimated 8,000 carers aged 65 and over were receiving Carer's Allowance, and over 33,000 carers aged 65 and over had a carer premium included in their Income Support.

Note:

Figures based on a 5 per cent. sample of IAD Information Centre data rounded to nearest 1,000.

Pension Credit

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of pensioners in each London borough are *(a)* entitled to the pension credit and *(b)* claiming the pension credit. [153089]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of people who are eligible for Pension Credit is not available in respect of individual local authority areas. However, we estimate that approximately 500,000 pensioners in the London region (rounded to the nearest 50,000) are eligible for Pension Credit, which represents approximately 41 per cent. of the number of people in London aged 60 or over. Information on numbers of Pension Credit recipients in the London boroughs is given in the table.

Recipients of Pension Credit (individuals) by London borough, 31 December 2003

	Number of Pension Credit recipients (individual)	*Percentage of population aged 60 and over*
London Government Office Region	278,820	24
City of London	150	11
Barking and Dagenham	7,605	26
Barnet	10,605	18
Bexley	6,400	14
Brent	11,710	28
Bromley	8,135	13
Camden	8,685	31
Croydon	10,630	19
Ealing	11,280	24
Enfield	11,700	24
Greenwich	8,880	25
Hackney	11,230	44
Hammersmith and Fulham	5,915	25
Haringey	10,095	35
Harrow	7,815	20
Havering	7,900	16
Hillingdon	7,160	16
Hounslow	7,690	24
Islington	9,105	39
Kensington and Chelsea	5,235	19
Kingston upon Thames	3,620	14
Lambeth	10,340	32
Lewisham	9,700	27
Merton	5,505	17
Newham	12,795	44

Recipients of Pension Credit (individuals) by London borough, 31 December 2003

	Number of Pension Credit recipients (individual)	*Percentage of population aged 60 and over*
Redbridge	9,000	21
Richmond upon Thames	3,925	13
Southwark	10,570	32
Sutton	5,235	16
Tower Hamlets	13,310	55
Waltham Forest	9,705	29
Wandsworth	9,385	27
Westminster	7,805	27

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Percentages have been calculated using the ONS population estimates for mid-2002.
3. Figures for recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.

Privatised File Stores

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how he will ensure *(a)* that privatised filestores in the South East Region remain open and *(b)* that the files remain secure. [151528]

Mr. Browne: The Department expects to announce soon the outcome of the competition to manage the Departments storage and retrieval services.

Future delivery will involve operating from a single site. Modern recording and transmission systems will ensure that documents are available to local offices in South East Region and elsewhere, within 24 hours where necessary as now, to meet operational requirements.

The contract for record storage and retrieval will place, as it does now, specific requirements on suppliers regarding security of records. All bidding organisations have experience of operating security procedures and have offered assurances as to how this important aspect of the service will be managed.

HEALTH

Alcohol Advertising

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Food Standards Agency has commissioned into the relationship between alcohol consumption and alcohol advertising. [152811]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The most recent review of the research on alcohol consumption and advertising was undertaken by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's strategy unit as part of its work on developing the Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England. Its Interim Analytical Report, published on 19 September 2003, indicated that the evidence on the relationship between alcohol advertising and alcohol consumption was complex—certain studies suggested that there was a link between advertising and consumption, while other studies suggested that there was no such link.

Avian Influenza

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what circumstances avian influenza in poultry can be contracted by humans; what strains of avian influenza can be contracted by humans; and if he will make a statement. [151961]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* Avian flu infection occurs rarely in humans and is usually caught through direct contact with infected chickens or contaminated objects, via the respiratory route or hand/face contact.

Since 1996, the H7N7, H5N1 and H9N2 avian strains have been found in humans.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what work is being undertaken to develop a vaccine for the protection of susceptible persons from infection by the avian influenza virus. [152176]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Prototype viruses for vaccine production are being prepared by laboratories in the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Influenza Network. Once these prototype viruses are available they will be supplied to manufacturers as the "seed stock" for vaccine production.

The United Kingdom is an active participant in the WHO network through the Health Protection Agency National Influenza Reference Laboratory, the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control and the WHO Influenza Collaborating Laboratory at the National Institute of Medical Research.

Breast Screening

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress towards extending breast screening to all women aged 65 to 70 years by 2004. [151701]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The expansion of the national breast screening programme is progressing well. Implementing the expansion began in April 2001 and since then over 200,000 more women have been invited for breast screening.

At the end of December 2003 nearly 40 per cent. of breast screening sites were providing breast screening for women aged 65 to 70, with all sites expected to have implemented the extension by December 2004. Once the extension is fully implemented an extra 400,000 women a year will be invited for breast screening.

Breastfeeding

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child that the UK Government adopt the international code for marketing of breast-milk substitutes; what plans he has to introduce the remaining articles of *(a)* the 1990 Innocenti Declaration and *(b)* the international code into UK legislation; and what steps his Department is taking to promote and support breastfeeding in the first six months of infant life. [150820]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations came into force on 1 March 1995. These regulations implemented EC Directive 91/321/EEC, which embraces the principles of the World Health Organisation code of marketing of breast milk substitutes 1981. We are aware of the differences in United Kingdom legislation compared with the international code.

We are exploring with the Foods Standards Agency ways in which the UK regulations could be better aligned to the international code.

The Government are fully committed to the promotion of breastfeeding and have a commitment in the NHS Plan for "increased support for breastfeeding" and recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of an infant's life. Further commitment to this goal is reflected in a target that has been set to increase breastfeeding initiation rates by two percentage points, focusing particularly on those from disadvantaged groups as part of the priorities and planning framework 2003- 06. A resource pack will be launched in the spring of 2004 to support the national health service in meeting this target. This work will be further developed in the context of the children's national service framework we will be publishing this year. The Department supports National Breastfeeding Awareness Week, a public health campaign to promote the benefits of breastfeeding through the NHS.

Contaminated Blood Products

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many haemophiliacs in the United Kingdom have been treated in each year since 1975 for *(a)* hepatitis C and *(b)* CJD acquired from contaminated blood products. [146985]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The number of haemophilia patients who have been treated for hepatitis C is not collated. There are no haemophilia patients who have been diagnosed with vCJD acquired from blood products.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many haemophiliacs died from blood product acquired infections in each year from 1975 to 1987. [146986]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the number of haemophilia patients who have died from Hepatitis C from blood products is not collected. Information from the United Kingdom Haemophilia Centre Doctors Organisation show 212 patients with haemophilia have died from liver disease to January 2000.

Viral inactivation of blood products and screening for HIV were first introduced in 1985. Information on the number of haemophilia patients who have died from HIV from blood products is not collected centrally. Figures provided by the Macfarlane Trust are only available from 1981, and are shown in the table.

	Number of patients
1981	1
1982	0
1983	1
1984	2
1985	13
1986	31
1987	40
Total	88

In my response to a question from the hon. Member on Monday 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 191–92W, the number of haemophilia patients infected with HIV/AIDS from infected national health service blood products, registered with the Macfarlane Trust and who died pre-1988 was listed as 87. The Macfarlane Trust has recently advised that the correct figure is in fact 88.

Coronary Angiograms

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many coronary angiograms were sanctioned by each primary care trust in England in each of the last three years; and how many of these were *(a)* second and *(b)* third interventions. [150729]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This data is not held centrally.

Delayed Discharge

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the social service departments in England that incurred fines for delayed discharge patients from NHS hospitals in January; how many fines were imposed; and what the total amount was of fines *(a)* in each social services department and *(b)* for England. [151799]

Dr. Ladyman: Liability for delayed discharge charging came into effect on 5 January. Figures for legal liability for delayed discharges for individual councils are not held centrally. However 29 councils have indicated that they have no liability for charges during the three weeks of 5 January to 25 January. During these three weeks national health service trusts have reported approximately 13,000 chargeable days in England as a whole, with a charging liability of approximately £1.4 million.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the procedure for non-EU overseas dentists wanting to work in the UK to be able to so do; and what plans his Department has to make changes to this procedure. [151466]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists who qualified in countries outside the European economic area must pass the General Dental Council's international qualifying examination (IQE) for admission to the dental register. The General Dental Council is independent of the Department of Health, but we are aware that the council is monitoring the results of the IQE and the experience of dentists who have sat the examination.

Depression

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the financial cost of the treatment of depression to the NHS in the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [152358]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information relating to the financial cost of treating depression is not collected centrally and no estimate can be made. However, the Government are aware that depression represents a significant burden, not least to those affected and their families.

Drug-related Deaths

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to which year the baseline level of 1,480 drug-related deaths refers in relation to the target of reducing the number of drug-related deaths. [152832]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The year to which the baseline level of 1,480 drug-related deaths refers in relation to the target of reducing the number of drug related deaths is 1999.

Drugs/Alcohol (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children between 11 and 15 years were admitted to hospital in 2003 owing to alcohol-related problems. [152556]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The table shows the number of admissions to national health service hospitals of children aged 11 to 15 with a primary diagnosis of alcohol-related illness during 2002–03.

Primary diagnosis	*Total admission episodes*
Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol	2,760
Alcoholic liver disease	0
Toxic effect of alcohol	562
Total	3,322

Notes:
1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
3. Figures have not (yet) been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics, Department of Health.

Food Promotion

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) on what basis the *(a)* chair and *(b)* panel members were chosen for the event organised by the Food Standards Agency in relation to the promotion of foods to children; [152601]

(2) what the cost was of the event held on 27 January by the Food Standards Agency in relation to the promotion of foods to children, identifying the *(a)* production, *(b)* planning and *(c)* staffing costs; what the purpose of this event was; what outcomes were achieved; and if he will make a statement; [152605]

(3) how many people attended the event held by the Food Standards Agency on 27 January in relation to the promotion of foods to children; and how many hon. Members attended; and what representations he received from hon. and right hon. Members on changing the date of the event in order to allow them to attend. [152621]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) event, "Defusing the Diet Time Bomb", on the promotion of food to children, was held on the evening of Tuesday 27 January at the QEII centre in Westminster.

The event was part of a series of activities organised by the FSA to promote public debate on the issue of the promotion of food to children, following the publication of the research review commissioned from Professor Gerard Hastings of Strathclyde University in September 2003. In October 2003, the FSA published a paper setting out a range of possible policy options that might be considered as a result of the Hastings findings.

The purpose of the event on 27 January was to provide members of the public with an opportunity to debate the issues publicly with each other and with stakeholders drawn from consumer organisations, the food and advertising industries, public health and children's organisations. A report of the event, along with views gathered at other stakeholder events, will be used to inform the FSA board decisions on what advice to offer to Ministers.

The chair was chosen on the basis that he was independent and fair. The six main panellists were selected to provide a balance of views and a range of expertise and experience to reflect the range of issues under discussion.

Over 450 people attended in person at the QEII centre. 439 viewed the debate online via the FSA's web-site and an estimated 1,000 watched on digital television.

One noble Member of another place attended. A number of apologies were received from hon. Members but no representations were made by any right hon. or hon. Members to change the date.

The total cost of the event was £147,000, of which £143,500 was allocated to production and a further £3,500 for planning and preparation. Staffing at the event was provided by FSA staff.

GM and Animal Insulins

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 13 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 708–09W, what assessment he has made of the difference in costs between GM and animal insulins. [152391]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of animal and genetically modified (GM) insulins varies between different manufacturers and presentations. The national health service list price of animal insulins is between £0.66/ml and £1.85/ml, and GM insulins, between £1.05/ml and £2.60/ml. Although the prices of individual insulins vary, the overall cost of medicines to the NHS is controlled by the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme which limits the profits companies are allowed to make through their trade with the NHS.

Health Inequalities

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the individuals and organisations from which his Department, its executive agencies and the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible received a response to the consultation, Tackling health inequalities: Consultation on a plan for delivery. [149870]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 22 January 2004]*: A summary report of the responses received to the "Tackling Health Inequalities: Consultation on a Plan for Delivery" was published by the Department in June 2002. There were almost 600 written responses received and registered, and over 1,000 people attended regional conferences to consider the issues raised. A list of the registered names of individuals and organisations, together with a copy of the summary report has been placed in the Library.

Health Services Review (Surrey/Sussex)

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of the South East Surrey and North West Sussex Health Services Review (Bagnall Review) which began in February 2001. [147971]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I understand that the Bagnall Review was commissioned in the year 2001 by the former East Surrey and West Sussex Health Authorities, and carried forward by the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority (SHA) from 2002.

As consistent with our policy on "Shifting the Balance of Power", ownership of all information relating to this matter now lies with the SHA and the hon. Member may wish to approach the Chair of the Board or the Chief Executive.

Health Statistics

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS statistics are collected specifically by age groupings including the *(a)* over 75s and *(b)* over 60s. [151909]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 4 February 2004]*: Where practicable, relevant and justified, statistical collections by the Department include information on the date of birth or age of patients or other statistical subjects. Some data collected may include analysis by age groups and these may cover partly or wholly the over 60 and over 75 age groups.

The available information on collections that specifically collect by age-bands and those that collect individual age data is shown in the table.

Department of Health information collections that include data by age-band only

Collection	*Over 75 age-band*	*Over 60 age-band*	*Other information*
Smoking Cessation Services Return[1]	No	Yes	Other bands up to 59, then 60 and over
Attribution Dataset[1]	Yes	Yes	5-year bands up to 80–84, then 85 and over
Summary of Genito-urinary Medicine Services[1]	No	No	45–64, then 65 and over

[1] Patient data

Department of Health information collections that include data by individual ages:

Data on patients

Hospital Episode Statistics

National Joint Registry (hip and knee joint replacements)

Patient Care in the Community: Community Learning Disability Nursing

Patient Care in the Community: Community Psychiatric Nursing

Patient Care in the Community: District Nursing

Summary of Chiropody Services

Summary of Contraceptive Services

Summary of Occupational Therapy Services

Summary of Physiotherapy Services

Summary of Speech and Language Therapy Services

Adult Screening Programme: Breast Screening (Screening Unit)

Adult Screening Programme: Breast Cancer (Health Authority)

Adult Screening Programme: Cervical Cytology

Immunisation Programmes: Health Authority Activity

National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS)

Pathology Laboratories: Cervical Cytology and Biopsies

Mental Health Minimum Dataset (MHMDS)

National Survey of Patient Experience

Data on the NHS workforce

Annual Census of General Medical Practitioners (GMPs)

Salaried Doctors employed under the Salaried Doctors Scheme

Annual Hospital and Community Health Services Medical and Dental Workforce Census

Annual Hospital and Community Health Services Non-Medical Workforce Census

Non-principals returns (assistants, trainee registrars and other doctors working in GMP practices)

Personal Medical Services (take-up of PMS status amongst GMPs)

Nursing Campaign Return (nurses returning to work in the NHS).

Hepatitis C

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the basis was upon which the calculation of compensation for those that contracted hepatitis C from NHS blood products was made. [151856]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The following independent resources were considered in order to determine the level of ex-gratia payments to be made by the Skipton Fund:

The scheme of payments implemented by the Macfarlane Trust.

The scheme of payments implemented by the Eileen Trust.

The report of the Hepatitis C Working Party to the Haemophilia Society.

The report of the Scottish Executive's Expert Group on Financial and Other Support chaired by Lord Ross.

The payment structure was also influenced by the need to consider the issue of making such ex-gratia payments in the context of other demands on the health care budget.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recourse families of patients who died of the effects of hepatitis C contracted through NHS blood products will have to compensation. [151857]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The announcement of a payment scheme for every person who was alive on 29 August 2003, and whose hepatitis C infection is found to be attributable to national health service treatment with blood or blood products, was made on 23 January 2004. The Department has no plans to introduce a similar scheme or pay compensation to families of those who have died of the effects of such an infection.

If negligence on behalf of the NHS or private suppliers is suspected, families of those who have died are entitled to pursue punitive damages through the courts.

HIV/AIDS (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the incidence of *(a)* HIV positive and *(b)* Aids was among children aged from one year to 15 years in 2003. [152562]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In children aged one to 15 years, there were 81 confirmed HIV diagnoses in the United Kingdom in 2003, including 12 who presented with AIDS. These numbers will rise as late reports are incorporated.

In total, 742 children aged one to 15 years with diagnosed HIV infection were known to be living in the UK in 2003.

Source:
National Study of HIV in Pregnancy and Childhood, Institute of Child Health, London and the Health Protection Agency.

MRSA

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to reduce the number of cases of MRSA in hospitals. [151715]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* We already have standards to ensure there is a managed environment, which minimises the risk of infection to patients, staff and visitors. Hospital performance in infection control has shown an improvement over the last three years but intensified action is required and a new action plan has been produced. We are confident that implementation of "Winning Ways—Working together to reduce Healthcare Associated Infection in England", will reduce infection rates for all pathogenic bacteria, including methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus.

Neurology Services (Hampshire)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in improving neurology services in *(a)* Portsmouth and *(b)* South East Hampshire in the last five years; and what plans he has for the services. [151994]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since April 2002, responsibility for commissioning neurology services in Portsmouth and East Hampshire rests with Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust (PCT). During this time, the PCT has been working closely with East Hampshire PCT, Fareham and Gosport PCT and Southampton University Hospitals National Health Service Trust to reduce waiting times for the service and will continue to actively work in partnership with the NHS trust to look at ways of further developing the service.

The national service framework (NSF) for long term conditions will focus on improving the standard of neurology services across England. It will also address some of the generic issues that are important to people with non-neurological disabilities; such as access to rehabilitation services, provision of good quality information, support for carers and access to community equipment, assistive technology and wheelchairs. We have appointed an external reference group and working groups to make recommendations and consider areas and issues for proposed standards. We currently plan to publish the NSF in December 2004 for implementation from 2005.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which of his powers will be transferred to elected regional assemblies where they are introduced; and which body holds each of those powers. [152101]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The White Paper, "Your Region Your Choice", set out the Government's plans for the powers and responsibilities of English regional assemblies.

An assembly will:

Have a duty to promote the health of the population of the region. This will include scrutinising the assembly's own policies and strategies;

Support the development and implementation of a health improvement strategy for the region, working with the relevant regional director of public health;

Appoint the regional director of public health as the assembly's health advisor.

None of these will require a transfer of powers from the Secretary of State for Health or from any agencies accountable to him.

Respite Care

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money his Department gave to projects that deal with respite care projects for terminally ill children in 2003. [151665]

Dr. Ladyman: Funding for projects providing respite care for terminally ill children is available from national health service primary care trusts. Information on the amount provided is not collected centrally.

School Fruit

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 585W, on the School Fruit Scheme, how much the Government spent centrally on administering the National School Fruit Scheme in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03, excluding the cost of the fruit. [152750]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 3 February 2004]*: Payments by the Department to local operators in the 27 areas that piloted the National School Fruit Scheme in 2001–02 included an estimated £20,000 for administration.

All costs in 2002–03, in these pilot areas and in the three whole regions that joined the scheme during the year, were met by bodies receiving grants from the lottery-funded New Opportunities Fund. These grants included 1.7 per cent. for administration; on the basis of which the estimated cost of administrating the scheme in 2002–03 was £170,000.

Smoking

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress in smoking policy reviews in Government buildings. [150814]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We have not undertaken a formal review of smoking policies in all Government buildings. The Department has taken the lead from April 2003 in making our buildings smoke-free and we continue to encourage employers and managers of public places to introduce smoke-free policies.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of *(a)* how many and *(b)* what proportion of children aged between 11 and 15 years smoke. [152557]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It is estimated that, in England in 2002, 10 per cent. of 11 to 15-year-olds smoked cigarettes regularly (at least one cigarette a week), around 324,000 young people aged 11 to 15.

Statins

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the impact of the new general medical services contract on the prescribing of statins in primary care for patients with high cholesterol levels. [152833]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The quality indicators for the new general medical services contract include cholesterol management for patients with coronary heart disease. This will reinforce general practitioners' current work to deliver the quality standards set out in the national service framework for coronary heart disease, which are driving the present increase in statin prescriptions, with an estimated saving of 6,700 lives per year and preventing many more people from having heart attacks.

Universal Vaccination

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence he has assessed relating to the value of universal vaccination as a means of protecting the population against disease. [151313]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Vaccination has been one of the most effective interventions along with improvements in clean water supplies and nutrition in reducing infectious diseases throughout the world. The introduction of vaccines in the United Kingdom against a number of childhood diseases, including whooping cough, measles, mumps, rubella, polio, haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib), and diphtheria has lead to significant reductions or elimination (in the case of smallpox) of these diseases.

There are a number of good examples where the level of a disease has fallen following the introduction of an effective vaccine. Following the introduction of Hib in 1992, there was a 98 per cent. fall in the number of laboratory confirmed cases in children under five years of age. Similarly, the meningococcal C vaccine, introduced in November 1999, resulted in a reduction in the number of laboratory confirmed cases of meningococcal group C disease by around 95 per cent. in babies under 12 months of age. Oral polio vaccine has been extremely effective in eliminating poliomyelitis from the UK. Excellent progress towards worldwide eradication is being made, and the World Health Organisation hopes to have interrupted wild polio transmission by the end of 2005.

Vegetables

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list in respect of all vegetables their carbohydrate content; and which are regarded by his Department as having too much carbohydrate to qualify for inclusion as vegetables in a healthy diet. [145535]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Carbohydrate content of vegetables is given in McCance and Widdowson's 'The Composition, of Foods' (Sixth summary edition), copies of which are available in the Library.

Government guidelines for a healthy diet, set out in the Food Standards Agency's 'Balance of Good Health' model, recommend eating plenty of fruit and vegetables and also plenty of foods rich in starch (carbohydrate) and fibre. Potatoes and yams, cassava and plantains are usually eaten as the main source of carbohydrate in a meal and, for the purposes of the 'Balance of Good Health', are grouped with other starchy foods in the 'bread, other cereals and potatoes' section. Vegetables eaten in addition to the main starchy food are covered by the 'fruit and vegetables' section.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Civil Service (Disabled People)

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out the number of employees in the Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148985]

Mr. Lammy: The following table is as at 1 April 2003. 442 members of staff in the Department for Constitutional Affairs have declared a disability. This information is obtained through a confidential survey issued to all staff, and collected against the following categories, which are based on Cabinet Office guidance. My Department is a member of the Disability Working Group.

Disability description	*Total*
Reduced physical capacity	159
Hearing impairment	65
Mobility impairment	61
Visual impairment	33

Disability description	*Total*
Physical co-ordination difficulties	28
Learning disabilities	19
Mental illness	8
Speech impairment	[1]
Reduced physical—with one or more other disabilities	32
Mobility—with one or more other disabilities	20
Hearing—with one or more other disabilities	12
Visual—with one or more other disabilities	5
Learning—with one or more other disabilities	[1]
Physical co-ordination difficulties—with one or more other disabilities	[1]
Disfigurement—with one or more other disabilities	[1]
Mental illness—with one or more other disabilities	[1]
Disability unknown	[1]

[1] No declarations have been received.

Committee Membership

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who the members of the *(a)* Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace, *(b)* Advisory Committees on General Commissioners of Income Tax, *(c)* Civil Procedure Rule Committees, *(d)* Judicial Studies Board, *(e)* Council of Tribunals and *(f)* Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151815]

Mr. Lammy: The following table details the membership of: *(c)* Civil Procedure Rule Committee, *(d)* Judicial Studies Board, *(e)* Council of Tribunals and *(f)* Legal Services Consultative Panel (which replaced the Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct on 1 January 2000).

There are 86 Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace, each having between and eight and 16 members in total. They would each normally serve nine years in total and are not remunerated.

There are 74 Advisory Committees on General Commissioners of income tax, each having between six and eight members in total. They would each normally serve nine years in total and are not remunerated.

I will place a copy of the full list of names in both Libraries of the Houses when they are available.

Public Body	*Member*	*1st Term*	*2nd Term*
Civil Procedure Rule Committee Remuneration: Members of the Civil Procedure Rule Committee do not receive remuneration. However, under Civil Procedure Act 1997 Section 2(5), the Lord Chancellor may reimburse the members of the Committee with "travelling and other out-of-pocket expenses". Subject to that, there is no payment made to members.	Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers (ex officio)	1 October 2000–.	
	Sir Andrew Morritt (ex officio)	17 July 2000–	
	Sir John Dyson	1 September 2003 (without term)	
	His Honour Judge StephemOliver-Jones QC	25 September 2002–31 August 2005	
	District Judge Carlos Dabezies	1 September 2001–31 August 2004	
	Master Steven Whitaker	25 September 2002–31 August 2005	
	Michael Black QC	15 February 2000–31 August 2004	
	Philip Rainey	1 September 2001–31 August 2004	
	Richard Walford	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	
	Julie Herzog	1 September 2001–31 August 2004	
	Nicholas Burkill	25 September 2002–31 August 2005	
	Andrew Parker	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	
	Ahmad Butt	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	
	Peter Candon JP	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	
Judicial Studies Board Remuneration: Susan Hewett and Sonia Shah-Kazemi each receive a fee of £150 for attending each meeting as they are not full time members of the judiciary.	Lord Justice Keene (Chairman)	31 July 2003–30 July 2007	
	Lady Justice Smith DBE	2 October 2000–1 October 2004	
	Mrs Justice Hallett DBE	1 October 1999–30 September 2002	1 October 2002–30 September 2004
	Mrs Justice Cox	31 July 2003–30 July 2007	
	Mr Justice Crane	1 October 2001–30 September 2005	
	Mr Justice Sumner	1 October 1999–30 September 2002	1 October 2002–30 September 2004
	Mr Justice Sullivan	1 October 1999–30 September 2002	1 October 2002–30 September 2004
	Judge Richard Bond	1 August 2001–24 June 2002	25 June 2002–24 June 2004
	Judge Dick Pollard	1 April 2000–31 March 2002	1 April 2002–31 March 2004
	District Judge Jeremy Cochrane	1 August 2001–28 February 2004	
	District Judge (MC) Phillip Wassell	1 October 2002–30 September 2006	
	Godfrey Cole	4 January 2004–3 January 2006	

Public Body	Member	1st Term	2nd Term
	Susan Hewett JP OBE	1 January 2003–31 December 2005	
	Sonia Shah-Kazemi	30 September 2003–29 September 2005	
	Sir Hayden Phillips (ex officio member)		
Council on Tribunals The Chairman receives an annual retainer of £44,973 plus travel expenses. The Chairman of the Council's Scottish Committee receives an annual retainer of	The right hon. The Lord Newten of Braintree PC QBE	1 October 1999–30 September 2002	1 October 2002–30 September 2007
	John Elliot	1 June 1998–31May 2001	1 June 2001–31 May 2004
	Carolyn Berkeley JP	1 April 1999–31 March 2002	1 April 2002–31 March 2005
£22,486 plus travel expenses. Members receive an annual retainer off £10,945 plus travel expenses.	Michael Brown JP	1 May 1996–30 April 1999	1 May 1999–30 April 2002 3rd term 1 May 2002–30 April 2003
	Elizabeth Cameron	2 September 2002–1 September 2005	
	Anne Galbraith	1 September 1997–31 August 2000	1 September 2000–31 August 2003
	Rosalind Hepplewhite	1 September 2002–31 August 2006	
	Susan Howdle	1 April 1998–31 March 2001	1 April 2001–31 March 2004
	Penny Letts	1 September 2002–31 August 2006	
	Stephen Mannion	10 August 2001–9 August 2004	
	Bernard Quoroll	1 May 2003–30 April 2007	
	Douglas Readings	1 September 1997–31 August 2000	1 September 2000–31 August 2003
	Professor Genevra Richardson	1 February 2001–31 January 2004	
	Sandy Russell CB	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	
	Paddy Waring	1 November 1997–31 October 2000	1 November 2000–31October 2003
	Heather Wilcox	1 February 2003–31 January 2007	
	Ann Abraham	4 November 2002	n/a
Legal Services Consultative Panel.	Lord Justice Potter (Chairman)	1 January 2000–31 December 2001	1 January 2002–31December 2004
Members are not renumerated	Professor Hugh Brayne	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	
	Lady Elizabeth Finsberg	1 January 2000–31 December 2005	
	Karen McKay	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	
	Richard Moorhead	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	
	John Randall	20 March 2000–21 December 2005	
	Simon Sapper	1 January 2000–31 December 2005	
	Alan Street	1 January 2000–31 December 2005	
	Peta-Sweet	1 January 2000–31 December 2005	
	Dr. Matthew Weait	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	
	Jonathan Acton Davis QC	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	
	Jonathan Goldsmith	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	
	John Hannam	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	
	David McIntosh	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	
	John Young CBE	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	
	John Randall	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	

Crown Court (Exeter)

Nick Harvey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Department has for the future of the Crown Court in Exeter; what impact he estimates this will have on the workings of the Crown Court in Barnstaple; and if he will make a statement. [152776]

Mr. Leslie: The Crown Court in Exeter is due to relocate to purpose built accommodation at the end of 2004. The new premises will provide additional courtroom capacity, which takes account of the projected workload for Exeter over the next 20 years.

The impact of the new Exeter Court on the Crown Court in Barnstaple will not be considered until the new Exeter Courts are fully operational. If, at that stage, it is thought appropriate to make any changes to the current arrangements consultation with all interested parties will take place. There is therefore no immediate impact on the Crown Court in Barnstaple.

Hutton Inquiry

Mr. Amess: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what selection procedure was followed for the appointment of Lord Hutton to oversee the Dr. Kelly inquiry. [152676]

Mr. Leslie: Where a Government decide that they wish to invite a senior judge to conduct an Inquiry, the Prime Minister invites the Lord Chancellor to recommend a suitable judge. This process was followed on this occasion, and, after consulting the senior judiciary, the Lord Chancellor proposed Lord Hutton and he accepted the appointment.

Magistrates

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures he plans to reduce the age profile of magistrates benches, with specific reference to rural areas. [151776]

Mr. Leslie: The written ministerial statement made in this House on 6 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 43–44WS, on the National Strategy for the Recruitment of Lay Magistrates announces the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor's decision to remove the lower age limit for applicants to the magistracy who can show that they have the key qualities needed for appointment. This is intended to help in achieving a more diverse and better-balanced bench. The National Strategy itself contains proposals to encourage younger people, including advertising in a range of media, local radio and cinemas. A bus advertising campaign began on 1 November 2003. As a direct result of this 2,283 inquiries have been received of which 1,224 (54 per cent.) were from those aged between 18–40. Advisory Committees in rural areas regularly review the make-up of their benches at the outset of their recruitment campaigns with the intention of attracting the right range of people, using their local knowledge and ideas developed through the National Strategy.

Security Passes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in (i) his Department and (ii) departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147987]

Mr. Leslie: In the last 12 months, 113 security passes have been reported lost and 16 reported stolen by staff within the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Additionally 294 security passes were reported lost and 13 were reported stolen within the departmental agencies.

When a security pass is reported lost or stolen, appropriate steps are taken to reduce the risk of unauthorised access into any of the Department's buildings.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148630]

Mr. Lammy: The following table provides the number of people in my Department who have claimed statutory sick pay for the periods defined in each year since 1997.

My Department is committed to managing sickness absence effectively and to meeting the targets for reduced sickness absence as set out in the departmental plans.

	Less than one week	*One to three weeks*	*Four to six weeks*	*Seven to 12 weeks*	*13 to 20 weeks*	*21 to 28 weeks*	*Total employees*
1997	633	249	38	52	45	0	1,017
1998	1,537	717	115	154	80	0	2,603
1999	2,868	1,198	170	198	122	0	4,556
2000	2,834	1,284	190	205	172	0	4,685
2001	2,746	1,359	222	249	185	0	4,761
2002	3,242	1,507	228	298	197	0	5,472
2003	2,402	1,057	139	139	52	0	3,789

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 6 February 2004

PRIME MINISTER

BBC

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will list the occasions in the last 12 months when *(a)* he and *(b)* his staff have made (i) written and (ii) oral representations to the BBC about news and current affairs coverage;. [153268]

(2) if he will list the occasions in the last 12 months when *(a)* he and *(b)* his staff have made representations to broadcasters other than the BBC about news and current affairs coverage. [153269]

The Prime Minister: In the last 12 months, my office will have had many discussions with all sections of the media, including the BBC, as part of their normal day-to-day duties. A list of all such discussions is not maintained centrally.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Adzido Pan-African Dance Ensemble

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the Arts Council funding for the Adzido Pan-African Dance Ensemble was in each of the last three years; how many staff are employed by the ensemble, broken down by *(a)* dancers and *(b)* others; and how many performances it has put on in each year since 2000. [152252]

Estelle Morris: The following table provides a breakdown of the information requested.

		2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Funding	Arts Council England Funding	£748,250	£781,956	£981,704
Employment	Dancers	16	16	15
	Other	17	15	11
Performances	UK Performances	59	64	18
	International Performances	2	6	1
	Education workshops and participatory sessions	556	296	38

The Company was accepted into the Arts Council's Recovery Programme in 2002, receiving an additional £500,000 to their core grant above, to help stabilise it. It is anticipated that it will begin creating and touring new work in the 2004–5 financial year.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what improvements in health care have taken place in Afghanistan since the end of the war. [150623]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Since April 2002 72 hospitals, clinics and women's healthcare centres have been rebuilt. The Ministry of Health has established a Child and Adolescent Health Department and a Department of Women and Reproductive Health to tackle high infant and maternal mortality rates.

The World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development and the European Community are helping the Afghan Ministry of Health, through NGOs, to provide a basic healthcare service to the entire population. The package consists of services for (i) maternal and newborn health; (ii) child health and immunisation; (iii) nutrition; (iv) communicable disease; (v) mental health; (vi) disability; and (vii) supply of essential drugs.

Immunisation is having a real impact. 12 million children have been immunised against polio and 16 million against measles since 2002, saving 30,000 lives. Cholera and diarrhoeal diseases are being tackled through health education, water chlorination and the construction of wells throughout the country.

Recruiting, training and deploying health care workers (especially women) is a real challenge, especially in rural areas. The absence of female health workers is being addressed by the World Health Organisation, which is running a variety of health courses to boost the number of skilled birth attendants, nurses and midwives.

Despite the substantial investment in the provision of basic health care in Afghanistan, the effective delivery of services across the whole of the country will take many months. But efforts to improve the health of people in Afghanistan will need to continue for many years and will require the support of the international community over the long term.

Overseas Offices

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the devolved offices the Department has overseas which are able to take decisions on local spending policy. [152081]

Hilary Benn: I have listed the devolved DFID offices that take decisions on local spend and policy. Based on wide experience, DFID considers that country programmes are best planned and managed within the country concerned, subject to the size of programme being such as to warrant the costs.

Africa
Addis Ababa Ethiopia
Accra Ghana
Nairobi Kenya
Lilongwe Malawi
Maputo Mozambique
Abuja Nigeria
Kigali Rwanda
Pretoria South Africa
Dar Es Salaam Tanzania
Kampala Uganda
Lusaka Zambia
Harare Zimbabwe

Asia and Pacific
Dhaka Bangladesh
Beijing China
Suva Fiji
Delhi India
Kathmandu Nepal
Bangkok Thailand
Hanoi Vietnam

Caribbean
Bridgetown Barbados

Latin America
La Paz Bolivia
Brasilia Brazil
Managua Nicaragua
Lima Peru

Europe
Kiev Ukraine
Moscow Russia
Pristina Kosovo

TREASURY

Inland Revenue (IT Service)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 570W, and in connection with the 28th Report of the Committee of Public Accounts, Session 1999–2000, HC 431, Inland Revenue/EDS Strategic Partnership, Re-tendering the contract in 2004, Paragraph 54, and Minutes of Evidence (HC 431-i) Questions 14 and 40, who the board member responsible for Mr. John Yard's division on 12 April 2000 was; on what date he commenced planning for retendering the Inland Revenue's information technology service; and on what date it was decided that a market-making exercise would be held prior to retendering that contract. [153408]

Dawn Primarolo: The Board member responsible for Business Services on 12 April 2000 was Tim Flesher, who at that time was the Inland Revenue's Deputy Chairman. As I stated in my answer of 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 803W, planning for the ASPIRE project began in January 2001. In addition, as I stated in my answer of 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 141W, the Market making exercise was conceived by the Inland Revenue between August and October 2001; it was also committed to at that time.

National Insurance

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy not to collect national insurance contributions from individuals who will reach state pension age during the course of a financial year where those individuals will be unable to accrue any additional rights to contributory benefits in respect of those contributions. [153409]

Dawn Primarolo: The UK national insurance scheme operates on the "pay as you go" principle so that the contributions paid by people of working age fund the benefits of people who are currently claiming benefit. The Government believes that it is right that working people between the ages of 16 and the state retirement age should contribute to the payment of benefits of those not in work and to the funding of the NHS.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the size of the surplus on the national insurance fund has been in each of the last 20 years; and how much of this surplus was borrowed by the Government, and at what rate of interest, in each of those years. [153407]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the excess of receipts over payments for the National Insurance Fund for the past 20 years. Negative figures indicate an excess of payments over receipts.

Financial year	*Excess of receipts over payments (£ million)*
1983–84	580
1984–85	374
1985–86	316
1986–87	414
1987–88	1,581
1988–89	3,081
1989–90	-62
1990–91	1,485
1991–92	-3,459
1992–93	-4,897
1993–94	1,112
1994–95	2,279
1995–96	1,008
1996–97	-98
1997–98	1,871
1998–99	2,669
1999–2000	2,161
2000–01	4,841
2001–02	4,351
2002–03	2,899

Notes:
1. Figures refer to the Great Britain National Insurance Fund only. Northern Ireland has a separate Fund.
2. Figures are taken from the National Insurance Fund accounts, which are published annually by The Stationery Office.

Details of investments are set out in the National Insurance Fund Accounts published annually by The Stationery Office.

Ivory

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many seizures by Her Majesty's

Customs of ivory and items containing ivory resulted in successful prosecutions in each year since 1997; and what percentage of such seizures those prosecutions represented in each year. [153011]

John Healey: There have been no prosecutions relating to Customs seizures of ivory or ivory products in this period.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Contigencies

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans he has for the training of personnel in multi-agency roles in civil contingency. [153039]

Mr. Alexander: The Emergency Planning College, which is part of the Cabinet Office, has been the long-standing primary provider of training in emergency planning. All of this training is conducted in a multi-agency environment and students are drawn from the local, regional and national levels.

The College's forward plan is based on a progressive expansion of its current programme designed also to meet the growing demand for training arising from the Civil Contingencies Bill. This expansion programme will include the recruitment of additional instructors, a wider range of courses and the exploitation of its new teaching and accommodation facilities.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how he intends to ensure that there will be a common training programme for those involved in contingency planning at regional and national level. [153040]

Mr. Alexander: The Emergency Planning College, has been the long-standing primary provider of training in emergency planning. Government delivered or sponsored training in contingency planning, including that of the College, accords with the common doctrine laid out in 'Dealing with Disaster' produced by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat within the Cabinet Office. This publication, revised and re-issued in Summer 2003, gives the overall guidance on terminology, practice, procedure and principles for the management of major emergencies.

Once the Civil Contingencies Bill passes into law, 'Dealing with Disaster' will be replaced with new guidance.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how he intends to ensure that those responsible for competence and continuity in regional and national contingency planning fully discharge their responsibilities to the public. [153041]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary chairs Cabinet Committees overseeing this work. Their membership includes Ministers representing the Government Departments that have responsibilities in this area as well as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which is responsible for Regional resilience, and senior representatives of the emergency services and intelligence and security services. These Committees drive and monitor both contingency planning and the resilience capability building programme. The Cabinet Secretariat, under Sir David Omand, provides central co-ordination for this activity, including monitoring relevant training and exercising of emergency capabilities.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many Government Departments are involved in civil contingency co-ordination at *(a)* national and *(b)* regional level. [153042]

Mr. Alexander: The Home Secretary has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the Government's response to major emergencies at both national and regional levels. He chairs the Civil Contingencies Committee.

At the national level, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) in the Cabinet Office, under the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator, Sir David Omand, has the task of driving, monitoring and co-ordinating the range of departmental work necessary to develop the UK's resilience and contingency planning ability. The core frameworks through which the CCS co-ordinates the contingencies planning of Government Departments are the Capabilities Programme, announced by the Home Secretary in a statement to the House on 3 March 2003, and the Lead Government Department list, announced in answer to a Parliamentary Question on 23 July 2002.

At the regional level, the Government has established a new civil protection tier designed to provide a strong bridge between civil contingency planning at national and local levels. This activity is co-ordinated through the Government Offices for the Regions and the Regional Co-ordination Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what percentage of staff employed within the Office are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145769]

Mr. Alexander *[pursuant to his reply, 20 January 2004 Official Report, c. 1130–32W]:* The following answer should be used.

Table A shows the number and percentage of staff in departments and agencies aged 55 and over at 1 April 2003. Table B shows the number and percentage of recruits to departments and agencies over the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 who are aged 55 years and over. The figures in both tables are based on the headcount of permanent civil servants. The numbers and totals are rounded to the nearest 10 from the raw data, while the percentages shown are calculated using the raw data alone. Hence the percentage does not always appear as if calculated from the rounded numbers. Any numbers and percentages less than five have been suppressed and are displayed as a dash.

Table A:

Department	Age 55+	Others	Total	Percent 55+
Cabinet Office	180	1,780	1,960	9.4
COI	30	330	360	8.1
Sec & Int Services	490	4,200	4,690	10.4
DCMS	50	640	690	7.5
MOD	18,550	74,900	93,450	19.8
ODPM (excluding Agencies)	350	2,600	2,940	11.9
DfES	470	4,760	5,220	8.9
DEFRA	1,410	9,680	11,080	12.7
Home Office	1,900	20,520	22,420	8.5
Charity Commission	50	520	580	9.0
HM Prison Service	6,100	38,060	44,160	13.8
Crown Prosecution Service	550	6,890	7,440	7.4
Legal Secretariat	10	30	30	16.7
Treasury Solicitors	40	500	540	7.8
CPSI	10	40	40	11.9
DCA	2,210	10,310	12,530	17.7
HM Land Registry	1,100	7,840	8,940	12.3
Trade and Industry	1,280	8,970	10,240	12.5
ACAS	150	750	900	16.8
ECGD	50	340	390	12.7
OFGEM	10	260	270	2.9
Health & Safety Executive	580	3,680	4,260	13.6
OFWAT	10	230	240	5.4
OS	140	1,640	1,780	7.6
DfT (excluding Agencies)	250	1,700	1,940	12.7
HM Treasury	60	980	1,040	5.4
Customs & Excise	2,490	20,470	22,950	10.8
GAD	10	90	100	10.3
Inland Revenue	8,580	74,260	82,840	10.4
ONS	340	3,130	3,470	9.8
Royal Mint	90	720	810	10.6
DWP	11,860	122,410	134,270	8.8
Northern Ireland Office	320	160	190	17.7
Privy Council Office	—	30	30	8.8
Scottish Executive	1,190	10,920	12,110	9.8
Crown Office & PFS	80	1,380	1,450	5.4
General Register Office (Scotland)	40	180	220	17.7
National Archive for Scotland	20	130	150	12.6
Office SOS for Scotland	10	90	100	11.7
Registers of Scotland	90	1,280	1,370	6.8
National Assembly of Wales	430	3,290	3,720	11.6
OHMCI	10	80	90	14.6
Wales Office	10	40	50	18.8

Table B:

Department	Age 55+	Others	Total	Percent 55+
Cabinet Office	—	160	160	—
Parliamentary Counsel Office	—	10	10	—
COI	—	80	80	—
Sec & Intelligence Services	10	220	230	6.1
DCMS	—	50	60	—
MoD	1,330	6,360	7,690	17.3
ODPM (excluding agencies)	50	310	350	12.8
DfES	30	320	340	7.8
DEFRA	60	620	680	9.1
Home Office	310	3,250	3,560	8.7
Charity Commission	—	70	70	—
HM Prison Service	480	3,790	4,270	11.2
Crown Prosecution Service	60	720	780	7.4
Legal Secretariat	0	—	—	—
Treasury Solicitors Department	—	90	90	—
Lord Chancellors Department	220	1,390	1,610	13.9
HM Land Registry	60	520	580	9.5
Department of Trade and Industry	60	640	690	8.4
ACAS	—	40	40	—
ECGD	—	50	60	—
OFGEM	—	50	50	—
Health & Safety Executive	10	280	300	4.1
OFWAT	0	50	50	0.0
OS	10	70	80	9.3
HM Treasury	—	80	80	—
Customs & Excise	90	1,150	1,240	7.3
GAD	—	10	10	—
Inland Revenue	1,320	12,100	13.420	9.8
ONS	20	350	370	5.7
Royal Mint	—	20	30	—

Table B:

Department	Age 55+	Others	Total	Percent 55+
DWP	1,710	12,340	14,050	12.2
Northern Ireland Office	—	20	20	—
Privy Council Office	0	—	—	—
Scottish Executive	90	960	1,040	8.2
Crown Office & PFS	20	220	240	8.6
General Register Office (Scotland)	0	—	—	—
National Archive for Scotland	—	10	10	—
Office SOS for Scotland	0	10	10	0.0
Registers of Scotland	10	120	140	10.1
National Assembly of Wales	110	350	460	24.0
OHMCI	—	10	10	—
Wales Office	0	—	—	—

Source:

Mandate: Figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Rounding may lead to inconsistencies between the sum of individual cells and the totals are calculated from the unrounded numbers. Numbers and percentages less than five have been suppressed and are represented by "—".

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children's Fund

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the impact of the reduction in Children's Fund money for projects on jobs and services for young people. [151429]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* The 2003–04 mid-year review of expenditure found that the Children's Fund was underspent in the first half of the year.

The Department met representatives from the main voluntary sector organisations involved in the Fund, the LGA and the ADSS on 18 December to discuss the review and assess its impact. Officials then wrote to all Children's Fund partnerships on 19 December 2003. We advised partnerships that where our decisions at the mid-year review had compromised their ability to meet contractual obligations, we would revisit them. Furthermore, we set aside some money to assist where there was a likelihood of staff redundancy or premature closure of services. The Children's Fund regional teams discussed this in detail with partnerships during January, identifying where we should restore funds taken back in the mid year review. This process was completed at the end of January.

Infanticide

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) on what basis he deemed it appropriate to state ahead of *(a)* the Appeal Court judgment in the case of R *v.* Angela Cannings and *(b)* the subsequent review of cases announced that children taken away from birth parents as a result of judgments where expert witness testimony from Sir Roy Meadow has been instrumental should not be returned to them if judgments are found to be unsafe; [151025]

(2) what directions he has issued to local authority departments to *(a)* identify and *(b)* secure documents relating to cases involving infanticide or harm to children which relied on expert testimony from Sir Roy Meadow; [151026]

(3) when the Minister for Children first ordered an investigation into the number of children who were taken away from parents who may have been sent to prison for cot death; and what actions he took subsequently; [150807]

(4) what directions have been issued to social services departments to identify and secure documents relating to cases involving infanticide or harm to children which relied on expert testimony from Sir Roy Meadow. [151091]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: The Appeal Court announced its judgment in the case of R *v.* Angela Cannings on 19 January 2004. I am now studying the judgment carefully, in the light of the Attorney-General's statement in the other place on 20 January.

School Deficits

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the schools in West Derbyshire which ran a budget deficit in the year ending 31 March 2003; and how much this deficit was for each school. [150880]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas, rather than districts within an area: West Derbyshire is a district of Derbyshire local education authority. The information for Derbyshire LEA is as follows:

Derbyshire[1] schools showing a deficit budget in the year ending 31 March 2003

School name	*DfES number*	*Deficit budget[2] (£)*
Aldercar Community School	4,089	(385,356)
Buxton Community School	4,510	(171,070)
New Mills School and Sixth Form Centre	4,057	(168,981)
Heanor Gate Science College	5,408	(160,393)
Tupton Hall School	4,034	(157,267)
Swanwick Hall School	4,000	(141,791)
Shirebrook School	4,199	(110,976)
Newbold Community School	4,194	(100,461)
Chapel-en-le-Frith High School	4,019	(99,237)
The Dronfield School	4,509	(97,717)
Ilkeston School	4,167	(84,536)
Hilton Primary School	2,370	(81,672)
Heritage Community School	4,198	(78,025)
Mortimer Wilson School	4,001	(76,935)
St. Giles C of E Primary School	3,541	(75,501)
Fairfield Infant and Nursery School	2,362	(50,995)
New Whittington Community Primary School	2,294	(45,244)
Birdholme Nursery and Infant School	2,285	(44,053)
Mill Hill School	5,416	(43,853)
John Port School	5,405	(36,555)
Granby Junior School	2,141	(34,951)
Ripley Junior School	2,201	(28,220)
Hady Primary School	2,290	(20,770)
Repton Primary School	5,202	(17,787)
The Delves School	7,009	(17,593)
Pottery Primary School	2,624	(17,582)
Wirksworth Infant School	2,276	(14,572)
Waingroves Primary School	2,371	(14,347)
Highfield Primary School	2,620	(14,277)
Buxton Infant School	2,061	(13,776)
Holme Hall Primary School	2,510	(13,568)
Larklands Infant School	2,375	(13,365)
Westbrook Special School	7,015	(12,801)
Newtown Primary School	2,181	(12,534)
Christ Church C of E Primary School	3,025	(12,135)
The Green Infant School	2,226	(11,389)
Etwall Primary School	2,105	(9,497)
Brockley Primary School	2,046	(9,493)
Penny Acres Primary School	2,131	(9,369)
Marsh Lane Primary School	2,097	(8,908)
Ladywood Primary School	2,328	(8,878)
Draycott Community Primary School	2,086	(8,728)
Riddings Infant School	2,006	(8,615)
St. Anne's Catholic Primary School	3,501	(8597)
Osmaston C of E Primary School	3,077	(8,540)
Birk Hill Infant School	2,095	(8,333)
North Wingfield Infant School	2,504	(7,683)
Codnor Community Primary School C of E Controlled	3,164	(7,572)
Hulland C of E Primary School	3,056	(7,104)
Ripley Infant School	2,202	(6,630)
Cotmanhay Infant School	2,139	(6,517)
Curbar Primary School	2,083	(6,399)
Kirk Hallam Community Technology College	4,169	(6,164)
Gorseybrigg Junior School	2,374	(4,026)
Kirk Langley C of E Primary School	3,061	(3,943)
Stanton-in-Peak C of E Primary School	3,090	(3,704)
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary	3,510	(3,022)
Swanwick Primary School	2,010	(2,994)
St. Thomas Catholic Primary	3,508	(2,895)
Granville Community School	4,097	(2,844)
Apperknowle Primary School	2,263	(2,710)
Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary	3,503	(2,476)
Abercrombie Primary School	2,296	(2,281)
Somerlea Park Junior School	2,008	(1,746)
Stanton Primary School	2,255	(898)
William Rhodes Primary School	2,299	(788)
Northfield Junior School	2,332	(403)

[1] Deficit budget is taken from Table B column 13—other revenue balance. This includes the cumulative balance of income less expenditure from revenue funding sources during the financial year and the balance from previous years.

[2] The data are as reported by Derbyshire LEA within their 2002–03 Section 52 Outturn Statement (Table B) submitted to the DfES.

Note:

The data are as at 6 January 2004. Currently the data remains provisional as it is subject to validation and could change.

School Drugs Advisers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many school drugs advisers are in post in each local education authority; and what estimate he has made of how many will be in post after April; [151430]

(2) what funding has been made available for employment of school drugs advisers *(a)* to date and *(b)* after April 2004. [151296]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department does not collect information centrally on the number of school drug advisers within each local education authority.

Funding for school drug advisers (£7.5 million per year) has been made available through the Standards Fund since 2001. From April 2004 it will be up to local education authorities and schools to support drug education, including school drug adviser posts, out of the total resources available to them.

Young people will continue to receive advice and support on drug issues from schools, the Connexions Service and a range of local agencies.

School Milk

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with

(a) other departments and *(b)* local education authorities to promote the consumption of milk in English schools. [152802]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Following a 20 per cent. reduction in the European Union (EU) subsidy on school milk from January 2001, this Department, the Department of Health and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, agreed to meet the annual £1.5 million shortfall from their budgets.

In addition, DfES officials discuss school milk policy with other Government Departments, local education authorities and schools whenever there are issues of common interest to resolve.

School Sport

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average time spent by pupils per week on *(a)* physical education and *(b)* after-school sport was in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [152698]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* Historically, the Department has not collected data annually on the average time per week spent by pupils on physical education and school sport. Data collected during the autumn term 2002 suggested that about a third of schools at Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 and two fifths at Key Stage 2 offered their pupils two hours of high quality PE and school sport each week within and beyond the curriculum.

Data is currently being collected on the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum.

Schools Expenditure

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent *(a)* per primary school pupil and *(b)* per secondary school pupil in (i) 1992, (ii) 1997 and (iii) 2001; and what plans there are to increase this figure. [148406]

Mr. Miliband: The information requested is given in the following table.

Our plans for funding increases for the next two years are that recurrent funding for schools in 2004–05 will increase by £1.6 billion, with a further increase of £2.2 billion in 2005–06. Capital funding is rising—this year it is £3.8 billion and will rise by £1.2 billion to £5 billion by 2005–06.

Net current expenditure[1] (after recharges) per pupil—Cash terms[2]

	Pre-primary and primary[3,4]	*Secondary[5]*
1992–93	1,880	2,770
1997–98	1,940	2,630
2001–02	2,850	3,400

[1] Net current expenditure (NCE) includes expenditure within schools and also that incurred centrally by the LEA's.
[2] Figures rounded to the nearest 10.
[3] Expenditure was not distinguished between pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of the Section 52 Outturn Statement in 1999–2000.
[4] The NCE per pupil figures for pre-primary and primary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in the pre-primary sector and maintained primary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained nursery and primary schools sector.
[5] The NCE per pupil figures for secondary relate the net current expenditure (after recharges) in maintained secondary schools to the total number of financial year pupils who are educated in the maintained secondary schools sector.
Source:
The financial data are as reported by LEAs and taken from Section 52 Outturn Statement submitted to the DfES from 1999–2000 onwards and prior to that from the Office of the Deputy-Prime Minister's (ODPM) RO1 statement. Pupil data are drawn from the Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Business Link

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many business link operators did not satisfy the independent audit of their finances and management information systems in each year since 1997. [152046]

Nigel Griffiths: Independent audits of Business Link Operators (BLOs) began in 2001 following re-engineering of the Business Link Operator network.

By their very nature independent audit reports contain recommendations for improvements in the financial and management control systems. To date there has been one instance where these reports have identified serious weaknesses in a BLO's financial and management systems. This was a identified as part of the current financial year's independent audits and we are developing with the BLO concerned an action plan to address the issues.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Business Link operators did not achieve the performance levels required for their key performance indicators in each quarter since 1997; and what steps have been taken to address this. [152051]

Nigel Griffiths: The Business Link Operator (BLO) Performance Management Framework was introduced in the 2002–03 financial year. As a result of a review of quarter 3 2002–03 performance levels, three BLOs were identified as seriously underperforming and their contracts were not automatically extended. Another two BLOs were identified as underperforming, but to a less serious extent.

All five have been required to undergo a Business Performance Review (BPR) which focused upon areas of weakness and which has resulted in a remedial plan. The appropriate Small Business Service Regional Team/ Regional Development Agency contract manager is monitoring the implementation of these plans.

Following their performance results for Quarter 4 2002–03, a further two BLOs have been required to undergo BPRs. These have also resulted in the production of a remedial plan which is being monitored by the appropriate contract manager.

Coal Health Handling Agreement

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she is taking to encourage co-defendants to sign up to the Coal Health Handling Agreement; and if she will make a statement. [147199]

Nigel Griffiths: The small number of outstanding issues is principally a matter for resolution between the claimants' solicitors and the co-defendants.

The two main groups of co-defendants are small private mines, which produced coal during the nationalised period and who have concurrent liability with British Coal and the successor companies, such as UK Coal who have consecutive liability. Negotiations with both groups are advanced. At the end of January, representatives of the DTI, the Claimants Solicitor's Group (CG) and the small mines will take part in a three-way mediation exercise to attempt to resolve the outstanding issues between them.

The Department has been working with its claims handlers to develop a mechanism for paying interim awards to men who worked for small mines. The first payment went out in December 2003.

Discussions with the successor companies to sign up to the Claims Handling Agreement have also reached an advanced stage. UK Coal and the CG have recently produced new information regarding dust levels in successor mines. The parties' experts are currently reviewing these reports and further negotiations will take place shortly. If the remaining issues cannot be resolved through negotiation, mediation will be explored.

Company Insolvencies

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many company insolvencies there have been since 1997, broken down by region and industry. [152009]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Table 1 records the number of company compulsory liquidations by region classified according to groupings of Official Receivers' Offices from 1999 to 2002 and the first three quarters of 2003. Statistics have not been provided prior to 1999 because of boundary changes.

Table 2 records total company insolvencies by industry from 1997 to 2002 and the first two quarters of 2003.

Company insolvencies consist of company compulsory liquidations and creditors voluntary liquidations. Only compulsory liquidations are available on a regional basis whereas the industrial analyses are available for total company insolvencies, but creditors voluntary liquidations cannot be separately identified.

Table 1: Company compulsory liquidations in England and Wales by region

						2003	
	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*
Anglia Region	719	672	708	733	205	153	149
London	1,161	951	911	1,147	281	200	174
Midland Region	694	664	553	821	190	141	135
North East Region	564	546	504	480	140	136	113
North West Region	660	597	586	987	180	153	161
Public Interest Unit	37	94	150	266	115	347	40
South East Region	768	769	715	1,028	261	227	200
South West Region	606	632	548	768	213	113	104
England and Wales total	5,209	4,925	4,675	6,230	1,585	1,470	1,076

Table 2: Total company insolvencies in England and Wales—Industrial analysis

							2003	
Industry	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*Q1*	*Q2*
Agriculture and Horticulture	51	65	75	67	90	76	9	16
Manufacturing								
Food, drink and tobacco	93	89	67	104	71	61	22	14
Chemicals	31	57	35	61	37	46	10	4
Metals and engineering	591	594	698	683	704	739	245	189
Textiles and clothing	596	526	419	423	320	304	75	63
Timber and furniture	181	149	190	187	199	179	22	22
Paper, printing and publishing	364	426	387	386	484	545	99	98
Other	613	652	780	678	717	768	99	126
Construction and Transport								
Construction	1,419	1,325	1,529	1,474	1,509	1,840	460	447
Transport and Communication	540	504	443	526	481	652	190	178
Wholesaling								
Food, drink and tobacco	158	139	187	150	125	142	26	28
Motor vehicles	41	60	38	29	24	64	56	53
Other	340	364	394	391	363	512	147	377

Table 2: Total company insolvencies in England and Wales—Industrial analysis

Industry	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003 Q1*	*2003 Q2*
Retailing								
Food, drink and tobacco	219	186	193	200	114	132	45	46
Motor vehicles and filling stations	132	120	142	141	172	174	20	16
Other	891	847	919	853	833	902	165	132
Services								
Insurance	111	101	118	57	28	35	13	9
Other financial and business services	1,528	1,617	1,831	1,605	1,618	3,215	1068	955
Hotels and Catering	609	626	562	530	538	740	177	126
Others	4,102	4,756	5,273	5,772	6,545	5,179	849	868
Total	12,610	13,203	14,280	14,317	14,972	16,305	3,797	3,767

Electricity Blackouts

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with her Irish counterpart about the potential for electricity blackouts with reference to the problems identified by the Irish electricity regulator and the Irish National Grid. [152551]

Mr. Timms: None.

Nuclear Energy

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures have been taken to publicise the joint Public Consultation on Modernising the Policy for Decommissioning the UK's Nuclear Facilities being undertaken by the Department in association with the Treasury, DEFRA, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly and the Ministry of Defence. [147999]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 15 January 2004]:* A Public Consultation on Modernising the Policy for Decommissioning the UK's Nuclear Facilities was issued on 28 November 2003. Copies of the consultation were circulated to MPs, MEPs, Welsh Assembly Members, MSPs, local authorities, members of the nuclear industry, relevant Trades Unions, environmental organisations, and a wide variety of stakeholders. Copies were placed in the Libraries of the House.

The consultation document was publicised by a national press notice released on the day of publication. This was sent to relevant newswires, national and regional newspapers, and posted on the DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk/nuclearcleanup/pdfs/decomcondoc.pdf

Nuclear Security

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Office of Civil Nuclear Security has been asked by *(a)* the United States and *(b)* French nuclear or transport authorities to assist in the security plans for the transhipment of weapons-usable plutonium from the United States to France. [150832]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* The Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS) is in contact with US authorities over the proposal for the transportation of plutonium from the United States to France and is in the early stages of discussions with them regarding the security requirements. OCNS, the UK's civil nuclear security regulator, would expect to be asked to approve a transport security plan prepared by the UK registered shipper Pacific Nuclear Transport Ltd. (PNTL), which the US authorities would like to undertake this transportation.

Parliamentary Questions

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will provide a substantive reply to the written question tabled on 15 January from the hon. Member for Perth, reference 147999. [152522]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today to question No. 147999.

Pneumoconiosis Benefit

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications for pneumoconiosis benefit have been received under the Workmen's Compensation Act 1979 in each year since the passage of that Act; and how many cases have been successful. [151494]

Mr. Browne: I have been asked to reply.

The information is in the table.

Pneumoconiosis—Workers' Compensation Act 1979 1979–80 to 2002–03

Financial year	*Applications received*	*Payments made*
1979–83[1]	5,610	4,293
1983–84	150	133
1984–85	100	55
1985–86	115	75
1986–87	95	61
1987–88	111	67
1988–89	123	55
1989–90	168	105
1990–91	195	147
1991–92	244	149
1992–93	227	162
1993–94	303	202
1994–95	371	307
1995–96	917	363
1996–97	550	453
1997–98	757	391
1998–99	1,012	651
1999–2000	1,199	799

Pneumoconiosis—Workers' Compensation Act 1979 1979–80 to 2002–03

Financial year	*Applications received*	*Payments made*
2000–01	1,352	928
2001–02	1,867	1,132
2002–03	2,099	1,258

[1] The information is not available broken down into separate years.

Sources:

DETR locally collated statistics 1979–2001.

Responsibility for the scheme transferred to DWP 2002.

DWP locally collated statistics from 2002.

Postal Services

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she will take to ensure that local communities in Huddersfield are adequately served by post offices. [152726]

Mr. Timms: Post Office Ltd. has undertaken that, on completion of its programme to rationalise the urban post office network, in the UK as a whole 95 per cent. of the urban population will still live within one mile of the nearest post office and it is expected that the majority will live within half a mile.

The Government have also placed a formal requirement on Post Office Ltd. to maintain the rural network. The Government have made available £450 million to underpin this obligation, in the first instance to 2006.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* rural post offices and *(b)* urban post offices have closed in Wales in each year since 1997, broken down by (i) constituency and (ii) local authority area. [151755]

Mr. Timms: Decisions on post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the post offices which have been closed since 1997 in the North Essex constituency; and when each closed. [152014]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* Decisions on post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the reasons for the closure of the sub-post office in Southill in South Dorset, with particular reference to its distance from other post offices. [152402]

Mr. Timms: Decisions on post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what public consultation was held with the local community about the proposed closure of Stanhope Street Post Office in Abergavenny; and what the outcome was. [150637]

Mr. Timms: Decisions on post office closure proposals following public consultation are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the responsibility of the Government under UK and EU law to provide an adequate postal service to the community. [152791]

Mr. Timms: The Government consider the maintenance of a universal postal service in this country to be of the highest importance. That is why the obligation is enshrined in primary legislation in the Postal Services Act 2000 and why Postcomm has the primary statutory duty to ensure the provision of a universal postal service at an affordable uniform tariff.

We wrote the universal service into law—Clause 4, section 1 of the Act guarantees:

A delivery every working day to homes across the UK.

A collection every working day from access points through out the UK.

A uniform and affordable price for posting a standard letter.

There are certain minimum requirements under Directives 97/67/EC and 2002/39/EC with regard to universal service. The directives leave discretion to member states, via their regulators, to define the specific requirements of the Universal Service within their national territory.

Postcomm is currently developing a more precise definition of the universal service as it is provided in the UK.

Small Business Europe

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what level of funding her Department has given to Small Business Europe in each year since its inception; and what level of funding she plans to give to the organisation in future financial years. [152528]

Nigel Griffiths: Up to the end of January 2004, Small Business Europe had received £346,926 from the Department of Trade and Industry for delivering the Brussels-based SME liaison office service. A further £170,000 is scheduled to be paid in monthly instalments for continued delivery up to the date of contract completion on 31 May 2005.

The payments broken down by financial year, and excluding VAT, are as follows:

FY 2001–02: £113,091

FY 2002–03: £127,174

Scheduled future payments under current contract:

FY 2003–04: £127,911 (£106,661 already paid at the end of January 2004)

FY 2004–05: £127,500

FY 2005–06: £21,250

Smart Award

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken to

ensure that support is provided by the wider business support infrastructure to assist Smart award-winners to take the outputs of their projects into the market place. [152056]

Nigel Griffiths: The Smart scheme in England has now been replaced by Grant for Research and Development. All potential applicants for the grants are urged to discuss their plans with their local Business Link operator before making an application and grant recipients are strongly encouraged to maintain a dialogue with Business Link throughout the period of the project and beyond. Business Link acts as a gateway to most of the services the Government offers to small and medium-sized businesses in England and Business Link Advisers can offer information and advice on all aspects of setting up and running a business. Business Link provides advice to over 300,000 small businesses every year at start up and growth stages with the quality and reach of that advice increasing all the time.

Solar Energy (Residential Dwellings)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in encouraging the use of solar panels on residential dwellings. [152868]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* Under the Clear Skies initiative, which supports the installation of solar hot water heating systems among other small-scale renewables, 1,585 individual household grants have been approved with a total value of £792,000. Of these, 622 with a value of £311,000 have been paid to date.

Under the Community stream of Clear Skies, funds offered for solar hot water heating have a value totalling £968,734. It is difficult to give an exact number of dwellings that this equates to but it is estimated at approximately 560.

Under the Major Photovoltaic Demonstration Programme, which provides grants for the installation of solar electric panels, 408 Stream 1 individual small-scale (0.5 kWp to 5 kWp) applications have been approved at a total value of £2,843,496. Of these 221 with a value of £1,436,978 have been paid to date. Approximately 80 per cent. of these are for residential dwellings.

Under Stream 2 (medium and large-scale) of the Programme, 25 group-housing (5 kWp to 100 kWp) applications have been approved with a total value of £2,684,866. These applications equate to approximately 500 roofs/dwellings.

Stop Now Orders

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the Stop Now Orders that were issued in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003; whether any of these were for traders based in the area of Dudley metropolitan borough council; and if she will make a statement. [152462]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Since June 2001 when the Stop Now Orders (EC Directive) came into force, seven stop now orders have been sought and obtained from the Courts. In 2001 one was obtained by a Trading Standards Department. In 2002 two were obtained by Trading Standards Departments and two by the Office of Fair Trading. In 2003 one was obtained by a Trading Standards Department and one by the Office of Fair Trading. None of the orders were concerned with traders based in the area of Dudley metropolitan council.

US-UK Energy Dialogue

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 9 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 454W, on the US-UK Energy Dialogue, on what dates the Commercial Working Group of the Dialogue has held meetings since March 2003; and where each of these meetings was held. [152982]

Mr. Timms: The commercial working group was developed by the US Department of Commerce and the Department of Trade and Industry as a forum to give US and UK energy companies a voice in discussions between the two Governments on bilateral energy co-operation, security and supply issues. It has met on two occasions—on 16 December 2002 in London and 26 February 2003 in Washington.

Wind Farms

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of whether large-scale wind farm development will affect the risk of large-scale electricity blackouts, with particular reference to more remote parts of the UK; [152550]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact of large-scale intermittent windpower generation on the operation of conventional back-up; [152552]

(3) what assessment she has made of the risks to security and stability of supply from *(a)* large-scale intermittent windpower generation and *(b)* the diseconomy of part-time operation of conventional back-up. [152553]

Mr. Timms: Existing electricity trading arrangements incentives market participants to deliver secure supplies and to manage the effects of intermittent generation, along with other risks, in so doing. Our proposals for BETTA will ensure that market participants in all parts of Great Britain face a uniform set of trading arrangements.

Analysis carried out as part of the White Paper process shows that the electricity system could cope with an increasing reliance on renewable generation, including wind. The White Paper analysis also highlights that as the proportion of intermittent generation increases, so does the cost of maintaining stable supplies. These costs need to be managed and new ways found to minimise them. We are already funding research into this through the DTIs Renewable Energy programme and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's SUPERGEN programme. In addition, as part of our current capital grant programme we allocated in 2002 an additional £4 million to facilitate the demonstration of new control, storage and metering technologies.

DTI and Ofgem will continue to monitor electricity security issues through the Joint Electricity Security of Supply working group (JESS).

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many representations he has received from Devon constituents in support of plans for an elected regional assembly for the South West. [153075]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received 11 responses from Devon constituents in support of plans for an elected regional assembly for the South West.

In addition, the Government's soundings exercise, which was held last year, sought to determine the levels of interest in holding a referendum on establishing elected regional assemblies. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received 61 responses from individuals in Devon, 20 of whom wanted a referendum, 40 of whom opposed such a referendum, and one of whom expressed no opinion. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister believed that there is not a high level of interest in the South West and has not initiated the local authority reviews that are the precursor to a referendum.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of discussions between NATO and the EU regarding a European Security and Defence Policy mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. [153324]

Mr. Straw: The UK's vision for Bosnia is a sovereign, independent and united country, with a democratic and accountable government, a free market economy and tolerance of minority rights. We expect it to fulfil its obligations to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. We wish to see Bosnia on an irreversible track towards European and Euro Atlantic integration. Getting there will require an evolution in the presences of the international community, including the EU and NATO. NATO Foreign Ministers agreed in December 2003 that the Alliance should start work with the EU on planning a possible EU mission under Berlin Plus arrangements. The Brussels European Council also in December 2003 endorsed this. Against this background, NATO and EU officials are taking forward planning on a possible EU mission, without prejudice to any formal decision at the June Istanbul summit to terminate SFOR.

The UK fully supports this process and wants to see NATO successfully terminate its SFOR mission in Bosnia, probably at the end of 2004, while maintaining a limited military operational presence in the country. This would be a significant step in Bosnia's development towards a self-sustaining future. We want to see an EU-led presence, which is robust, credible and able to provide a safe and secure environment allowing the EU to take forward its objectives in Bosnia. The UK has offered to take the first lead of this EU-led mission.

The UK wishes to see the residual NATO presence run defence outreach activities such as defence reform and Partnership for Peace programmes. We also believe it should retain some operational activities, such as hunting for indicted war criminals and counter-terrorist operations.

Bosnia provides an opportunity for NATO and the EU to put their commitment to co-operation into practice in the first major Berlin Plus operation. Effective consultation at all levels will be crucial. The EU will need to develop a joined-up approach, linking its economic, civil, development and military instruments. The UK looks forward to supporting these efforts.

European Defence

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what steps have been taken in relation to the European Council's decision to begin the improvement of the preparation of European Union operations having recourse to NATO assets and capabilities; when such steps were taken; what further steps are envisaged; and if he will make a statement; [153325]

(2) what steps have been taken in relation to the establishment of a cell with civil and military components in line with the European Council's decision of 12 December 2003; what future steps are planned; when he expects such a cell to be completed and operational; and if he will make a statement. [153326]

Mr. Straw: The Conclusions of the 12–13 December 2003 European Council welcomed the Presidency paper on "European Defence: NATO/EU consultation, planning and operations." This sets out how the European Union's collective crisis management capacity can be strengthened, particularly in the field of planning. The European Council invited the Secretary General/High Representative, Javier Solana, to propose measures for the improvement of the preparation of European Union operations having recourse to NATO assets and capabilities, and for the establishment of a cell with civil and military components. The European Council concluded that these measures should enter into force as early as possible in 2004.

We look forward to the Secretary General/High Representative's initial report, which will be a basis for discussion among EU member states and with NATO and will lead to further, more detailed work. The Government supports the strengthening of NATO/EU planning links and of ESDP planning capacity, particularly in the civilian/military area. The Presidency paper reflects UK priorities and we will remain in touch with the Council bodies and other member states as work to implement it is taken forward.

Iraq

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1415W, on Iraq, what the timetable is for the International Advisory and Monitoring Board completing the

report on the income and expenditures of the Development Fund for Iraq by the Coalition Provisional Authority. [152413]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: No timetable for completion of the report on income and expenditures has been published by the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB). The IAMB is an independent body, with membership drawn from the UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development.

Pakistan

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which companies were represented on the trade mission to Pakistan in December 2003 which was joined by the Minister for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs. [152854]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI) led a Trade mission to Pakistan, on 7–12 December 2003. The mission was funded by UK Trade and Investment under the outward mission scheme; 12 UK companies took part in the mission.

NCCI have asked us not to release the names of the companies owing to commercial sensitivities.

Solana Paper

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he expects to take in order to implement the recommendations of the Solana paper adopted at the European Council of 12 December 2003; what changes he expects to make to the UK security posture; and if he will make a statement. [153327]

Mr. Straw: The Government expects initial implementation of the Strategy to concentrate on the four priority areas tasked by the European Council when it adopted the European Security Strategy at its December meeting: effective multilateralism with the UN at its core, the fight against terrorism, a strategy towards the region of the Middle East and a comprehensive policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Government are committed to the full implementation of the Strategy to help bring coherence and greater robustness to the EU's external policies.

The UK's security posture is already in line with the analysis behind the European Security Strategy. As outlined in the Strategic Defence Review New Chapter, we have already taken steps to ensure our forces are configured to respond to the new global threats of the post September 11th world by making our armed forces more flexible, with improved global reach. The UK has long argued for improved European defence capabilities, coherence in bringing together the EU's existing tools, both civilian and military, and a strong transatlantic link. The European Security Strategy sets out the framework to achieve this.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Departmental Staff

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are employed by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies for which he is responsible. [153233]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the following table.

	Number of staff
Departmental staff	20,363
Agency staff	122,432
Non-departmental public bodies staff	4,372
Total staff	147,167

Notes:
1. Numbers are point in time as at 31 December 2003.
2. Numbers are expressed as staff in post (headcount) and are consistent with Cabinet Office definitions other than for the inclusion of staff on paid maternity leave.
3. Temporary staff are included.
4. Departmental Staff comprise the Department's Corporate Centre which includes Debt Management and the Disability and Carers Service.
5. Agencies include: Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service, Child Support Agency and Appeals Service.
6. Non-departmental public bodies includes Health and Safety Executive, and two Independent Statutory Bodies, Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority and Office of the Pensions Ombudsman.

DEFENCE

Bugaled Breizh

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 367W, on Bugaled Breizh, if he will give the locations of the other military vessels from other nations involved in the international exercise at the time of the sinking of the Bugaled Breizh. [153399]

Mr. Ingram: From information provided by the vessels at the time, the locations of the foreign warships involved in the international exercise were:

Nation/Name	*Location*
Dutch	
Karel Doorman	Alongside Devonport
Van Nes	Alongside Devonport
Dolfijn	On surface in position 49–32.33N 005–16.16W
French	
Primaguet	At anchor in Falmouth Bay
Cdt. Blaizon	At anchor in Plymouth Sound
German	
U26	Alongside Devonport
Spain	
Extremadura	Alongside Devonport

Civilian Deaths

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what steps his Department has taken to identify the number of civilians killed as a consequence of UK

military action in *(a)* Afghanistan and *(b)* Iraq; and what measures it adopts to address the needs of dependants; [143595]

(2) what his estimate is of the number of civilians killed *(a)* directly and *(b)* indirectly by UK forces during military operations in (i) Afghanistan and (ii) Iraq. [143594]

Mr. Ingram: We make every effort to minimise any impact of the coalition's military action on the Iraqi and Afghanistan populations. We have no reliable means of ascertaining the numbers of Iraqi military personnel or civilians killed during major combat operations in either country.

Since the end of major combat operations in both countries, UK forces have reported all fatalities which arose from incidents in which they were involved and of which they are aware. In cases where we are able to confirm that a civilian fatality has been caused by UK forces, local officials have access to advice to help them assess the needs of dependants.

Defence Fire Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the budget for the Defence Fire Service was in 2003; what the anticipated outturn is; how much is budgeted for 2004; and what additional costs have been incurred as a result of Operation Telic. [146167]

Mr. Ingram: There is not a single central budget for the Defence Fire Service, the costs of which are disaggregated to lower level budget holders. Information on the total cost of the Defence Fire Service is therefore not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The total additional costs to date of the Defence Fire Service deployment for Operation Telic has been £3.28 million.

Defence Munitions Depot (Dean Hill)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Defence Munitions Depot at Dean Hill is still in use; and if he will make a statement. [147178]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 14 January 2004]:* The Defence Munitions Depot at Dean Hill is no longer in use. All munitions tasks have been transferred to other sites as part of the closure plan, which remains on schedule for completion by 1 April 2004.

Iraq

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reports he has received from non-governmental organisations of their estimates of Iraqi *(a)* civilians and *(b)* military casualties (i) during and (ii) since the recent conflict. [140788]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has recently received reports from Human Rights Watch and Medact both of which contained their estimates of the numbers of military and civilian casualties.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will allow *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* others wishing to investigate human rights violations in Iraq full access to British military personnel stationed in southern Iraq. [141740]

Mr. Ingram: Requests made by an hon. Member or any other person to speak to a member of the British Armed Forces stationed in Southern Iraq or elsewhere are a matter for the individual concerned and his Commanding Officer. The individual must personally agree to the request. The Commanding Officer considers whether to allow access taking into account a range of factors including the reasons why access has been requested, operational security, the existence of any investigation or proceedings involving the individual concerned and the physical security situation at the time.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether complaints have been received from Iraqi lawyers acting on behalf of the families of the alleged victims of actions by British forces in Iraq with regard to the *(a)* conclusions and conduct of investigations and *(b)* alleged incidents. [147678]

Mr. Ingram: We are not aware of any complaints from Iraqi lawyers acting on behalf of families of the alleged victims of actions by British Forces in Iraq about the conclusions, or conduct, of investigations or about alleged incidents.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many incidents of alleged or possible civilian fatalities involving British forces in Iraq since the end of the conflict have been recorded by the units involved. [147700]

Mr. Ingram: UK forces report all fatalities of which they are aware arising from incidents in which they were involved but it is not always possible to confirm whether fatalities have occurred during a particular incident. For example, in some incidents we believe Iraqi dead may have been taken away by their compatriots before UK forces could investigate. In other incidents UK forces have been forced to withdraw before any Iraqi fatalities could be confirmed.

As at 2 February, since the end of major combat operations 37 alleged fatalities had been reported by British units of which 18 have been the subject of investigations. All those not subject to investigation involved assailants attacking British forces and in defending themselves the soldiers involved were acting clearly within their Rules of Engagement.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Challenger 2 tanks went into action in Operation Telic without their operational nuclear, biological and chemical filters having been fitted; [152767]

(2) what individual protection the crews of Challenger 2 tanks had against nuclear, biological and chemical attacks other than NBC suits when in action during Operation Telic; [152769]

(3) what the effect is on the operating efficiency of Challenger 2 tanks when their crew members are wearing nuclear, biological and chemical suits; and for how long it is deemed practicable to continue to wear them in a tank in action. [152779]

Mr. Ingram: All Challenger 2 crew members are equipped with a full set of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Individual Protective Equipment (IPE), which includes boots, gloves, a respirator and NBC suit. Crews are also trained to operate their vehicles whilst wearing this equipment. In addition to the NBC IPE issued to each Challenger 2 crew member during Operation Telic, further individual protection was provided through the issue of a prophylactic drug (Nerve Agent Pre-treatment System (NAPS)). NAPS is to be taken orally, when ordered to do so, during preparations for operations. Further protection against the-effects of nerve agents was provided in the form of atropine injectors. Atropine is self-administered following exposure to nerve agent poisoning.

The length of time personnel could wear NBC IPE while in armoured vehicles and the effect on their operational efficiency would vary according to the circumstances.

As stated in the National Audit Office's report, none of the Challenger 2 tanks that went into action in Operation Telic was fitted with operational Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) filters. NBC filters were available in theatre but, owing to difficulties with asset tracking, were not issued to front line units in time to be fitted during the war-fighting phase of the operation. By the time NBC filters were issued to front line units, the NBC threat was deemed to have reduced significantly owing to the attrition of possible means of delivery.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the crews of Challenger 2 tanks which went into action in Operation Telic without their operational nuclear, biological and chemical filters fitted *(a)* wore individual NBC suits continuously and *(b)* had NBC suits with them for immediate use if attacked. [152768]

Mr. Ingram: All UK military personnel deployed in Iraq were issued with NBC Individual Protective Equipment (IPE) which they were required to carry with them at all times. Challenger 2 tank crews would have carried their NBC suits inside their vehicles during operations and would have worn them if the National Contingent Commander or local commanders deemed it necessary.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what procedures were in place during Operation Telic to alert the crews of Challenger 2 tanks to nuclear, biological and chemical attack. [152770]

Mr. Ingram: UK forces have well established procedures for the dissemination of NBC information to all locations, units, sub-units, down to individual sections and vehicles. This applies equally to static locations and manoeuvre units, and relies on the transmission of appropriate warnings and alarms over the normal Combat Net Radio, backed up with visual and audible warnings and alarms.

Operational Requirements

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who is entitled to make a request for an urgent operational requirement; what procedures are followed when a request has been submitted; how long it should take for an urgent operational requirement request to be considered; and if he will make a statement. [151348]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Frontline commands, theatre commanders or Directors of Equipment Capability (DECs) can each generate requests for Urgent Operational Requirements (UOR). These are passed to the Permanent Joint Headquarters for endorsement. DECs, in co-operation with Integrated Project Teams in the Defence Procurement Agency or Defence Logistics Organisation, investigate if it is possible to fulfil the requirement through the purchase of new equipment or the modification of existing equipment. Where this is so a business case is drafted. This is then passed through an accelerated approvals process, which allows procurement action to be taken in the minimum amount of time. In most cases, the approvals process can be carried out in around a week (and in some cases as little as 24 hours). The need to ensure coherence of UORs with operational plans and priorities, to explore alternative ways of meeting the requirement or to confirm that a feasible solution can be delivered within acceptable timescales can in some instances add to the length of time needed to approve individual business cases.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to the Questions tabled by the hon. Member for Norwich North on 8 December 2003, refs 143594–6. [153241]

Mr. Ingram: I have today answered two of the questions referred to by my hon. Friend, references 143594 and 143595, and I expect to answer the third, reference 143596, shortly.

Sea King

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 505W, to the hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler), on Sea King helicopters, if he will place copies of the Board of Inquiry report in the Library. [153398]

Mr. Ingram: It is not our practice or that of previous governments to place copies of the reports from Service Board of Inquiry in the Library of the House.

A Service Board of Inquiry is an internal fact finding investigation undertaken by the services for their own use, into the circumstances surrounding a particular accident or incident. There is a principle of confidentiality associated with BOI proceedings, which is intended to encourage the provision of forthright evidence. Accordingly, external distribution of BOI reports is usually limited to the next of kin of service personnel killed in in-service accidents, to HM Coroners to assist in their preparations for Inquests, and to other bodies with statutory duties to investigate incidents.

We will, when the investigation by the RN Flight Safety and Accident Investigation Centre is complete, place copies of the Military Aircraft Accident Summary in the Library of the House.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what instructions she has issued to *(a)* local authority environmental health departments, *(b)* the State Veterinary Service and *(c)* the Meat Hygiene Service in respect of actions to be taken to limit the spread of avian flu; [152171]

(2) how much imported food has been *(a)* condemned and *(b)* impounded or otherwise detained as a result of suspected contamination with avian influenza virus; [152172]

(3) what assessment she has made of whether the reported deaths of persons suffering from avian influenza resulted from *(a)* the handling of (i) live poultry and (ii) poultry meat and products and *(b)* the consumption of poultry meat; [152173]

(4) what tests are available to detect the avian influenza virus in imported food; whether screening is being carried out on existing stocks of imported food; and what the results were; [152174]

(5) what discussions she has had with the World Health Organisation on control measures necessary to limit the spread of avian influenza; [152175]

(6) what assessment she has made of the likelihood of the avian influenza virus mutating in a way which will increase its pathogenicity; [152177]

(7) whether the avian influenza virus is pathogenic to man; and whether it acts in concert with other pathogens to give rise to synergistic infection; [152178]

(8) what the route of infection of avian influenza is; and whether it is classified as a food-borne disease; [152179]

(9) what her assessment is of current risks to health from the *(a)* handling and *(b)* consumption of imported chicken meat in relation to avian influenza. [152180]

Mr. Bradshaw: As soon as the outbreak of avian influenza in Thailand, the only affected country with which we have regular commercial trade, was notified we put in place a prohibition on imports of poultry meat and uncooked poultry meat products from Thailand derived from animals slaughtered after 1 January 2004. Details were sent to all Border Inspection Posts, local authorities, the State Veterinary Service, Meat Hygiene Service and to HM Customs. All the enforcement bodies concerned deal with such safeguard measures on a regular basis and are familiar with the procedures and vigilance necessary for dealing with affected products. On 28 January a further prohibition on imports of live birds from affected countries was issued in line with action agreed by member states in the EU and guidance issued to The State Veterinary Service and HM Customs. Prior to this precautionary measure live captive birds, such as falcons and finches, could be imported from the region on the basis of strict controls, including 30-day post import quarantine and testing for avian influenza.

We are not aware of any food having been condemned as a result of avian influenza. Currently 31 consignments amounting to 489 tonnes of Thai poultry meat are detained at Border Inspection Posts, awaiting the required additional health certification.

The World Health Organisation are investigating a 'possible' human-to-human transmission of the disease in two sisters in Vietnam, but it is too early to say for definite whether or not this is the case. Human-to-human transmission of avian influenza is in any case rare and there have been no known cases of human-to-human transmission in this outbreak. The most likely source of infection resulting in human deaths from avian influenza remains in those known to have had direct contact with infected poultry.

Controls on production of poultry meat for export from Thailand, in place before the outbreak was confirmed, mean that the risk of infected meat being imported is very low. The normal tests for avian influenza are used to detect the disease in live animals, not meat. Testing of foods for microbial pathogens is seldom helpful in protecting public health because, if present at all, they are likely to be present in very small numbers and are not distributed evenly throughout foods. This means tests would be unlikely to detect the virus unless the level of sampling was impractically high and very expensive.

Defra has had no discussions with the World Health Organisation on this but the global strategy recommended by WHO includes the following:

the rapid elimination of H5N1 infection in bird populations by culling;

protection of those who are working with, and culling, chickens to protect their health and to reduce the risk of human infection;

improve surveillance of human respiratory disease and rapid case detection; and

development and production of a vaccine. This is a highly complicated process and four months is considered a minimum period before vaccine could be available. Additional issues of capacity and distribution would need to be resolved.

The WHO has said that, on the basis of presently available data, it does not conclude that any processed poultry products (whole refrigerated or frozen carcasses and products derived from them) and eggs in, or arriving from, areas currently experiencing outbreaks of avian influenza (H5N1) in poultry flocks, pose a risk to public health.

In the twentieth century there were four major influenza pandemics in 1918, 1957, 1968 and 1977. There is evidence suggesting that the 1957 and 1968 pandemics resulted from a major change to the previously circulating human virus by incorporation of genes from an avian influenza virus. Direct spread of the assumed progenitor avian virus to humans was not reproduced experimentally and it is thought that pigs, which are susceptible to both human and avian influenza viruses, may have played a role in supporting both viruses to allow gene re-assortment to take place.

Most avian flu viruses do not affect man, or cause very mild illness, such as mild influenza-like illness or conjunctivitis. Occasionally strains of avian flu emerge which are particularly nasty. The human cases in Asia have been severe respiratory infections with a high mortality.

The Food Standards Agency have advised that there is no risk of acquiring the Avian influenza virus through eating poultry meat. They consider the risk of infection through handling poultry meat is very low. There are no substantiated reports of people becoming infected through these routes.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the sensitivity of the test used on translocated badgers is in *(a)* positive response and *(b)* negative response. [150583]

Mr. Bradshaw: The test, which is generally used, for the detection of TB in translocated badgers is a test for antibodies (the Brock Test). This is generally accepted to have a low sensitivity (the ability to detect diseased animals). However it is difficult to give accurate values for the sensitivity because euthanased animals are not always subject to laboratory culture.

Where a badger translocation is carried out under licence (from Defra or English Nature) each individual badger is tested three times. If any of the three results are positive, the badger is euthanased. Any other badger that has been in contact with the positive testing badger is also euthanased, regardless of the results of its own tests

Where an orphaned or previously injured badger is translocated by an animal centre or similar body they follow a voluntary code of practice (drawn up by the RSPCA, National Federation of Badgers Groups and Secret World Wildlife Rescue). Any animal to be relocated is tested three times and, if it tests positive, is euthanased. This protocol does not advise in the destruction of badgers who have had contact with a test positive badger. It should be emphasised that this voluntary protocol was not devised or approved by Defra.

The Veterinary Laboratories Agency is trying to develop a range of TB tests for badgers with improved accuracy, including a gamma-interferon test.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many herds were placed under TB restriction in December 2002; and how many of those same herds were still under restriction in October 2003. [150571]

Mr. Bradshaw: A total of 725 herds were placed under movement restriction in December 2002. This includes 294 herds placed under movement restriction following disclosure of a new TB incident. The remainder were herds placed under movement restriction because the routine herd test was overdue.

Ninety six herds placed under restriction in December 2002 were still under restriction on 31 October 2003 (66 of those as a result of an ongoing TB incident).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many herds require 60-day testing for tuberculosis; and what the estimated annual cost is for this testing programme in 2003–04. [150587]

Mr. Bradshaw: All herds suffering a TB breakdown are subject to at least one short interval ("60-day") test. A total of 7,275 short-interval tests were carried out from April to December 2003, at an estimated cost (including administration costs) of £3,485k. The forecast cost for 2003–04 is £4,600k.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) pursuant to her answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 215W, what epidemiological inferences can be drawn from the observed seasonal trends in the incidence of TB in cattle; [150596]

(2) what further research she is planning into seasonal trends in the incidence of TB in cattle. [150712]

Mr. Bradshaw: The absolute number of new TB incidents disclosed every month is closely correlated to the rate of testing. Hence, the majority of incidents are detected in the winter months (October through March), when most herds are tested.

However, if the data are adjusted to take into account the seasonality of TB testing, there does not appear to be a clear seasonal pattern in the rate of new TB incidents disclosed each month (i.e. it is not possible to conclude that the herd incidence of bovine TB in certain months of the year is consistently higher than in other months).

Because of the difficulty in studying seasonality of TB infection, there are few reports investigating this aspect of the disease. However, the results of one such investigation was reported in a paper by Wilesmith et al (1982)[1]. They examined seasonal variations in the risk of acquiring infection between 1971 and 1976 for a Dorset cattle herd during an extensive TB herd breakdown. The data indicated that the April/May period presented the time of greatest risk. This correlated with possible exposure to re-infection at the start of the grazing season, exposure lasting for a relatively short time. However, re-exposure to infection was not necessarily the same as re-exposure to pasture, since some stock were out-wintered.

The Veterinary Laboratories Agency will continue to monitor epidemiological trends, including seasonality.

[1] Wilesmith, J. W, T. W. A. Little, H. V. Thompson and C. Swan. (1982). Bovine tuberculosis in domestic and wild mammals in an area of Dorset. I. Tuberculosis in cattle. Journal of Hygiene, Cambridge 89: 195–210.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of *M. bovis* was isolated from *(a)* carcases and *(b)* faeces from wildlife species tested in studies carried out by or on behalf of her Department and its predecessor since 1974. [150611]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information is as follows:

(a) All previous Defra information on *M. bovis* isolated from wildlife carcases was collated in the following review paper: Delahay, R. J., de Leeuw, A. N. S., Barlow, A. M., Clifton-Hadley, R. S. and Cheeseman, C. L. (2002). "The Status of *Mycobacterium bovis* Infection in British Wild Mammals: A Review". Veterinary Journal 163, 1–16.

(b) Two projects currently in progress involve sampling both live animals and carcase material from a variety of species. The data from these projects have not been fully analysed at this point so accurate figures are not available. Results from carcase material published in the OIE report on Wildlife disease 2003 showed that the prevalence of *M. bovis* infection was 2.9 per cent. in wildlife (669 cadavers, 20 positive cultures). The culture positive species were fallow deer, fox and muntjac.

Live sampling (samples including faeces) from over 4,000 small mammals (<30g) have shown that the prevalence of *M. bovis* is less than 0.3 per cent. The spoligotypes associated with these animals are largely of a type only found in small mammals.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 21–18W, under what circumstances genetic structures of *M. bovis* undergo mutation following sequences of transmission, with particular reference to transmission between species; at what rate mutations occur; whether techniques and facilities are available to detect these changes; and whether back-mutation of bacilli from final host species would assist in the determination of the direction of inter-species transmission. [150847]

Mr. Bradshaw: As *Mycobacterium bovis* is transmitted over time there is evidence that hyper variable regions of its genome change, although most of the genome remains stable. Changes can be identified using molecular biological techniques. Hyper variable regions may change in both intra and interspecies transmission. There is no reason to believe that, except for very rare adaptive changes, the rate of mutation will increase as a strain moves between species.

The rate at which mutations occur depends on the region of the genome. Hence, single nucleotides have an average rate of change of about 10^{-9} per nucleotide per generation. However, tandem repeats that show variable numbers (variable numbers of tandem repeats, or VNTRs), show a greater rate of change. Spoligotype changes are intermediate in rate between VNTR and single nucleotide mutations.

We use two main techniques to detect genetic variation in *M. bovis*. The first of these, spoligotyping, exploits a polymorphic region direct repeat (DR) locus in the genome that is composed of multiple 36bp DR copies interspersed by unique spacers, with strains varying in the presence or absence of spacers. The VNTR method targets 6 alleles (A-F) that vary in the length of internal repeat units, permitting strains to be differentiated on the number of repeats at each target; i.e. 7–5–5–4–3–3–3 would have 7 copies of allele A, 5 of B, etc. High throughput facilities for both of these techniques exist at the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA), allowing the molecular typing of about 4,000 to 5,000 strains per year. Our current models of the population structure of *M. bovis* suggest that the VNTR loci evolve faster than the DR repeat locus. Thus spoligotyping provides a global picture of the population structure and epidemiology of *M. bovis* in Great Britain, while VNTR typing has proved useful as a fine scale method for detecting local changes in the *M. bovis* population.

The evolution of the members of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex has led to specific host preferences; hence *M. tuberculosis* appears human restricted, while *M. bovis* consists of a series of clones with a wider mammalian host range. The process of host adaptation probably involves a number of discreet mutations, which would all need to revert to reverse the host adaptation. Back-mutation i.e. the reversion of mutations, occurs very infrequently. The rate for a specific single nucleotide reversion would be about $10^{-9} \times 10^{-9}$ (or 10^{-18}) per nucleotide per generation. Indeed, if some of these mutation events were deletions they could not revert without the re introduction of the DNA. These questions are being investigated using laboratory based molecular biological techniques at the VLA.

Chicken Welfare

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will commission research into broiler chicken welfare. [152150]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra funds an extensive research programme into broiler chicken welfare. This includes projects on key issues such as leg health and stocking density. Defra will continue to assess proposals for research.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the report from the EU Scientific Committee for Animal Health and Animal Welfare on chicken welfare. [152151]

Mr. Bradshaw: The report of the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare is the first step in enabling the Commission to bring forward proposals on specific welfare standards for meat chickens. The Commission has held discussions with an expert working group and other interested parties. The UK has been involved in this process and will continue to play a full role. The Commission expects to issue proposals later this year.

Fallen Stock Scheme

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the proposed timetable for the introduction of the fallen stock scheme to the pig and poultry sectors. [151645]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* The Board of the National Fallen Stock Company is actively working with the relevant trade organisations to agree arrangements which will meet the specific needs of the specialist pig and poultry sector. The Government have made clear that it will ring fence a proportion of the

Government funding so that these sectors will not lose out if they join the Scheme a little later than other livestock sectors. This has been accepted by the industry.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the effect of *(a)* a plentiful food supply and *(b)* the absence of a relative abundance of competitive fish species on the predation habits of large cod. [150914]

Mr. Bradshaw: Robust conclusions about such questions are difficult to make because the ecology of the North sea is complex and variable, and cod can eat a broad spectrum of food items. The current low level of cod abundance suggests that over the North Sea as a whole cod are unlikely to be food limited, although one cannot exclude the possibility of periodic local effects. As top predators, there are relatively few species with which large cod are likely to be in direct competition.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if her Department will carry out simulation modelling of cod stocks, in respect of ICES areas IVa and IVb, which show the effect of *(a)* reducing the numbers of large adult cod from the overall biomass, *(b)* reducing inter-species competitive pressure and *(c)* increasing food supplies. [150915]

Mr. Bradshaw: Existing models already show that the removal of large fish from the stock increases the threat to recruitment and hence further increase the threat of stock collapse. Multi-species models are still being developed by ICES. Results to date suggest that cannibalism, predation and food supply may have some affects on the cod stock, but they do not affect the overall conclusions of the North sea cod assessment, or the associated advice.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the optimal stock level of cod in a fishery, relative to the carrying capacity of the fisheries, which will *(a)* produce the highest rates of biomass increase and *(b)* optimise the economic yield of the fishery. [150917]

Mr. Bradshaw: Optimal exploitation and economic yield require a low fishing mortality rate which for North sea cod is likely to be about F = 0.20 to 0.25. This is three to four times lower than the average fishing mortality assessed over the last decade.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will propose to the Fisheries Council a package of measures based on selective fishing techniques aimed at reducing cod by-catch in haddock fisheries. [150938]

Mr. Bradshaw: Investigations are still continuing into selective fishing techniques in mixed fisheries. In particular, the three-year EU funded Recovery project is looking at reducing cod by-catch in several fisheries. We await the outcome of that project which could lead to further measures being proposed for selective fishing.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the effect on the yield of a cod fishery is of high level recruitment of juveniles; and what effect regulating juvenile mortality has on the overall productivity of a fishery. [150946]

Mr. Bradshaw: A high number of 1 and 2 year old cod recruiting to the fishable stock first results in higher catches of immature cod, followed later by increased abundance and landings of adults.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect of the closure of a cod fishery on the distribution of fish within the age classes in the fishery when the initial closure is precipitated by declining stocks of large fish. [150947]

Mr. Bradshaw: As part of the work of the EU Scientific Technical and Economic Committee, scientists evaluated the effect of the closed area for North Sea cod in the 2001 spawning season, and they showed that there was little significant benefit to the spawning potential of cod in 2001. Studies showed that fishing effort was diverted to areas with a lower density of cod, including areas that were ecologically sensitive, but then moved back once the closure ceased. It was concluded that the box would have to be extended in both space and time in order to be more effective.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what input she has to the research priorities of the Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour Working Group. [150940]

Mr. Bradshaw: National scientists can contribute to the initial working group discussions on priorities and terms of reference, which can then be reviewed and amended by ICES at the Gear and Behaviour Committee and the Consultative Committee, before final approval by the ICES Council, where national delegates can have their say.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will press for regulations to structure quota allocations to individual vessels to ensure that species allocated are grouped by escape behaviour. [150913]

Mr. Bradshaw: No. We are not aware of any methodology which would allow such an allocation on a systematic coherent basis. To some degree current market mechanisms allow quota transfer to reduce any imbalances.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether stocks of fish are naturally variable. [150918]

Mr. Bradshaw: Yes.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many United Kingdom scientists are *(a)* attached to and *(b)* members of the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour Working Group. [150242]

Mr. Bradshaw: The 2003 Working Group on Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour was attended by gear scientists and behaviour scientist from FRS Aberdeen (six), CEFAS Lowestoft (two), and gear technologists from the SFIA (two).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what mechanisms there are for the accurate measurement of

discards from commercial fishing fleets in UK waters; and whether different techniques are applied to catches from non-UK registered vessels; [150245]

(2) what representations she has made to the European Commission and the Fisheries Council on the banning of discards; [150298]

(3) what mechanisms exist to prevent fishermen who catch quantities of fish in excess of their by-catch allowances from discarding the excess. [150319]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the EU Data Regulation, national fisheries scientists undertake a programme of regional discard measurement at sea on a range of UK commercial fishing vessels, and similar programmes are undertaken by other member states on their vessels.

Discarding occurs when fisheries unavoidably catch small fish below the minimum landing size, or fish that are caught in excess of individual species quotas in a mixed fishery. The discard problem is under regular review, but a ban on discards is not yet considered to be practicable.

The European Commission published an action plan in November 2002 which suggested a number of options to reduce discarding, including consideration in the medium term of a discards ban. The UK and other member states have welcomed the Commission's intention to try out the ideas in its action plan through a series of pilot projects.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is possible, under current regulations and using permitted mesh sizes, to catch fish of a length below minimum landing sizes. [150248]

Mr. Bradshaw: Yes, but such fish may not be landed.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to increase industry participation in the collection of data used for assessments of the levels of fish stocks. [150313]

Mr. Bradshaw: A range of activities involve industry participation in the collection or interpretation of fisheries data. These include the formal collection of data on landings, fishing effort and discards; data collected on a range of chartered commercial fishing voyages during 2003–04 under a DEFRA-NFFO-CEFAS Fisheries Science Partnership programme; and an on-going dialogue about stock assessment and management between fishermen and scientists at meetings of the North Sea Fisheries Commission Partnership. ICES is currently investigating the role of industry data through the Study Group on the Incorporation of Additional Information from the Fishing Industry into Fish Stock Assessments (SGFI), which is attended by departmental scientists.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress she has made in the introduction of compulsory sorting grids in bottom trawls used for industrial fisheries to reduce the by-catch of juvenile round fish. [150314]

Mr. Bradshaw: In some Industrial fisheries, such as for North Sea sandeels, by-catch of juvenile round fish is believed to be low. In others there is a range of options which can be used to reduce by-catch e.g. closed areas or closed seasons. At present there are no plans to require the use of compulsory sorting grids in the industrial fisheries.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the last full meeting of the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour Working Group was held; and if she will place a copy of its report in the Library. [150315]

Mr. Bradshaw: The last full meeting of the ICES-FAO Working Group on Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour, which deals with a range of gear and behaviour issues in the ICES area, took place on 27–28 June 2003 at Bergen, in Norway. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the basis is for measurement of by-catch. [150320]

Mr. Bradshaw: The permitted percentage of by-catches by weight are specified in the technical conservation regulations, according to the fishing area, fishery, and mesh size.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her definition of grey fish is. [150478]

Mr. Bradshaw: Grey or blackfish is the colloquial expression used to describe undeclared, mis-reported or mis-recorded landings of fish, usually of quota stocks.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated carrying capacity, represented by biomass tonnage, is of cod in the *(a)* North Sea and *(b)* International Council for the Exploration of the Seas areas IVa and IVb. [150481]

Mr. Bradshaw: Current fishery models predict that to reach a low level of fishing mortality consistent with optimal use of the cod stock requires a sustained five-fold reduction in the fishing rate, and could produce an average SSB long term that is 10 times higher than at the present fishing rate. This would be about 550,000 tonnes if the number of young cod entering the stock does not change from the current level. It is not possible to provide separate estimates for sub areas of the North Sea.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimates are of cod biomass in *(a)* the North Sea and *(b)* International Council for the Exploration of the Seas areas IVa and IVb. [150483]

Mr. Bradshaw: The ICES estimate of the 2003 spawning stock biomass (SSB), comprising fish of mature age, was 53,000 tonnes. The Advisory Committee on Fishery Management regards this figure as uncertain owing to concerns about the accuracy of recent landings data. ICES does not provide separate estimates for areas IVa and IVb.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the effect of high mortality in large cod is on the *(a)* survival and *(b)* growth rates of juvenile cod. [150484]

Mr. Bradshaw: Removing adult cod is expected to have relatively little effect on the survival or growth rates of juvenile cod, but could significantly affect the production of eggs.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the main cause is of mortality in juvenile cod in the North Sea. [150485]

Mr. Bradshaw: ICES reports that for ages 0 and one, the majority of mortality is natural (predation by other fish species, seals and seabirds, disease etc) and that for ages two and over most mortality is caused by fishing.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the use of separator trawls as a means of reducing by-catches on non-target species in mixed fisheries; and what regulations govern their use. [150487]

Mr. Bradshaw: Separator trawls have been investigated to separate haddock, whiting and saithe from cod, flatfish, monkfish and nephrops. Some promising results have been obtained but much depends on correct rigging of the net. The use of separator trawls is not required generally in UK or EU regulations but a type of separator trawl is required for vessels wishing to fish in part of the area closed during the Irish Sea cod spawning season.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the implications for the sustainability of a fishery of concentrating on the catching of immature fish and leaving the bulk of mature adults untouched. [150948]

Mr. Bradshaw: A heavy immature fishery reduces the number of fish that survive to maturity, and therefore diminishes the replacement of the existing mature spawning stock. Even if mature fish were not exploited their numbers would therefore dwindle in the long term.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the effect is of catching *(a)* mature cod and *(b)* other species on the survival of juvenile and immature stocks, with particular reference to those which have reached sexual maturity and survived two spawning seasons. [149127]

Mr. Bradshaw: Catching large mature cod reduces the total egg production of the adult cod stock. To ensure sustainability of the cod and its fisheries a sufficient amount of mature cod need to breed (currently the advice is for 150,000 tonnes in the North sea). At lower levels of mature stock the production of young cod is put at risk.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under what circumstances the North sea sand eel quota would be reduced to below the level of the historic landing tonnage. [150848]

Mr. Bradshaw: Decisions on Total Allowable Catches for sand eels—as for other quota stocks—are taken annually by EU Fisheries Ministers on the basis of advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). If the scientific evidence suggests that TACs and quotas should be set below the level of historic catches, the UK would support this. The provisions on North sea sand eels agreed at the December Council of Ministers include not only reduced quota for 2004 but also new effort regulations to improve management of the stock.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the characteristics of the gear used by the Scottish white fish fleet are in terms of its selectivity in catching cod and haddock. [149117]

Mr. Bradshaw: The selectivity of both cod and haddock in trawls and pair seines is determined mainly by codend design, the most important characteristics of which are mesh size, twine size, presence of a strengthening bag and other elements of construction. The current legislation on technical measures for the North sea provides selectivity which is appropriate for haddock but is less satisfactory for cod which mature at a larger size.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many companies in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley are awaiting payment for work carried out during the recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease; how much is outstanding in each case; and what the timescale is for resolution of outstanding payments. [153382]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Weston-Super-mare (Brian Cotter) on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 261W.

The Department is in dispute with three contractors in Lancashire over charges arising, or which are claimed to have arisen, from the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak. One of these contractors is based in Chorley.

It would be inappropriate to comment on cases that are the subject of ongoing Court proceedings. Similarly, public comment cannot be made on civil cases that are pending.

Timescales for resolution of disputes are subject to judicial timescales and the willingness, or otherwise, of contractors to engage in alternative disputes resolution procedures.

School Milk

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many education authorities in England take advantage of the EU subsidy to provide school milk. [152800]

Alun Michael: One hundred and fifty six education authorities in England make use of the EU school milk subsidy scheme.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department spent on the School Milk Scheme in 2003. [152806]

Alun Michael: In England expenditure on the EU school milk subsidy scheme in the 2003 calendar year amounted to £5,275,236.89. Expenditure in England on the national top-up to the EU subsidy, co-funded equally by Defra, the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills, totalled an additional £1,361,961.27.

Swill

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has commissioned on the link between foot and mouth disease and processed swill feed. [152254]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is not currently undertaking any research into the link between foot and mouth disease and processed swill feed because the feeding of processed and unprocessed swill to animals is banned by EU legislation.

It has long been known that the feeding of under processed swill to animals can cause outbreaks of foot and mouth disease. We are not aware of any outbreaks of foot and mouth disease caused by the consumption of properly processed swill that has not been re-contaminated by unprocessed swill.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Terrorism

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the compatibility of his proposal that the standard of proof in the trial of suspected terrorists should be the balance of probabilities with the European Convention on Human Rights; and if he will make a statement. [153046]

Mr. Blunkett *[holding answer 5 February 2003]:* We need to address the question of how we deal with the serious and continuing threat of international terrorism and suicide bombers, many of whom are not deterred by fear of prosecution and how we can use the criminal law to prevent terrorism, rather than merely reacting after the fact.

I will publish discussion papers shortly on the challenge facing the UK in tackling terrorism effectively. It will be important to have a full debate on all the options presented and I look forward to hearing the hon. Member's proposals at the same time.

National Security

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what mechanisms are in place for informing the general public about changes to the national alert state; [152371]

(2) what the national state of alert is. [152374]

Mr. Blunkett: The UK has a range of alert systems that apply to the various sectors of the national infrastructure, dependent on the circumstances of each. These are determined in response to centrally prepared security, risk and intelligence assessments. Those sectors are informed of any changes as appropriate.

For reasons of security for any individual sector the policy of the Government and its predecessor is not to announce publicly changes in the Alert State system beyond the sector concerned.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are being taken to protect major business sites in London from suicide bombers. [152373]

Mr. Blunkett: As the hon. Gentleman will appreciate it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the detail of protective security measures at specific sites, as this could compromise the safety of those sites.

However, there has been good work, and positive relationships have been developed, between law enforcement and security agencies and private sector businesses. They have allowed the mutual exchange of advice and information on protective security on an individual and group basis.

The Home Office manual 'Bombs: Protecting People and Property' provides public guidance on protective security and is available on the Home Office website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorism/protect/atwork/index.html.

Official Secrets Act

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what statutory restrictions are placed on individuals instructing legal representatives in cases brought under the Official Secrets Act. [152320]

Paul Goggins: Under section 1(1) of the Official Secrets Act 1989 it is an offence for a member or ex-member of the security and intelligence services to disclose without lawful authority any information relating to security or intelligence obtained through their official position. This could include unauthorised disclosure to his or her legal representative. In cases where other Official Secrets Act provisions apply, the question of whether a person must seek authorisation to disclose will depend on whether the disclosure is likely to or will cause damage as set out in the relevant provisions of the Act.

There is no specific provision in the Act authorising disclosure of information to a legal representative as this would defeat the objective of the Act. However, the authorising entity—usually the employer organisation—will not unreasonably withhold authorisation to disclose to a legal representative information relevant to any criminal charge. The authorisation process itself is subject to judicial review.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* arrested, *(b)* charged and *(c)* convicted under the Official Secrets Act in each year since 1997. [152322]

Mr. Blunkett: Arrest data is not collected centrally at the level of detail requested.

The available information, relating to persons proceeded against at the magistrates' courts and found guilty at all courts under the Official Secrets Act 1911 and 1989 is shown in the table. It is not possible from the data held centrally, to identify summary offences under the Official Secrets Act 1920.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Number of persons proceeded against at the magistrates' courts found guilty at all courts under the Official Secrets Act 1911 and England and Wales 1997 to 2002[1]

	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*[2]
1997	1	1
1998	2	1
1999	—	1
2000	3	—
2001	—	—
2002	1	2

[1] These data are on the principal offence.

[2] Persons found guilty may exceed the number proceeded against in some prosecution may have taken place in an earlier year.

Pesticides

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) pursuant to his answer of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 444W, on pesticides, what assessment he has made of the potential for terrorist use of *(a)* unrestricted chemicals, *(b)* unrestricted pesticides, *(c)* restricted but commercially available chemicals and *(d)* restricted but commercially available pesticides; [152858]

(2) what discussions he has had regarding the misuse of pesticides containing aldicarb with *(a)* the Pesticides Safety Directorate, *(b)* the Health and Safety Executive and *(c)* the Health Protection Agency. [152859]

Mr. Blunkett *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* Counter terrorist and protective security planning takes account of the many available substances which could potentially be used by terrorists but have legitimate industrial, commercial or household use. Regulation of such dangerous substances is, of course, determined by environmental, health and public safety considerations in the first instance, and is a matter for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

We continue to strengthen our defences against terrorist attacks by having appropriate protective security measures in place.

Police

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many stop and search warrants were made by police under the Terrorism Act 2000 in Gloucestershire in 2003, and how many of these resulted in *(a)* subsequent court action and *(b)* conviction. [152979]

Mr. Blunkett: Figures on stops and searches under section 44(1) and section 44(2) of the Terrorism Act 2000 are published annually in a Home Office Statistical Bulletin.

The latest published figures are for the financial year 2002–03 and show that in the area of Gloucestershire constabulary, police conducted a total of 898 stops and searches under section 44(1) of the Act resulting in three arrests. 299 stops and searches under section 44(2) were carried out, resulting in nine arrests. Figures for 2003–04 are not yet available.

The data collected on stops and searches made under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 are not automatically cross-referenced by police forces with the data they hold on those charged. Therefore, this information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to his Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149332]

Mr. Blunkett: The Home Office actively promotes the better regulation agenda and the use of sunsetting where appropriate.

The following sunset clauses have been included in legislation from the Home Office since 1997:

(i) Section 5 of the Football (Disorder) Act 2000 (c.25).

(ii) Section 112 of the Terrorism Act 2000 (c.11).

(iii) Section 15(3) of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (c.16).

(iv) Sections 29, 105 and 123 (in conjunction with section 122 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (c.24).

(v) Section 1 of the Football (Disorder) (Amendment) Act 2002 (c. 12).

Specifically, in relation to the sunset clause relating to part 4 of the Anti-Terror, Crime and Security Act, I intend to fully debate the issues in part 4 at the time of the annual renewal of that legislation, and when the contents of Lord Newton's report on the Anti-Terror, Crime and Security Act are considered and debated in Parliament.

HEALTH

Asthma/Leukemia (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the incidence of *(a)* asthma and *(b)* leukaemia in children aged between 5 and 15 was in each year since 2000. [152549]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the incidence of asthma in children is not collected centrally. Hospital Episode Statistics recording the number of finished admission episodes for asthma in children aged five to 15 are shown in the table.

	Number of finished admission episodes
2000–01	12,266
2001–02	12,440
2002–03	11,394

Notes:

Finished admission episodes

A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Diagnosis (Primary Diagnosis)
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
Grossing
Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2001–02 and 2002–03, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health
The number of registrations of newly diagnosed cases of leukaemia[1] in children aged five to 14 in England in 2000, the most recent year for which data are available[2], was 168.
[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10), codes C91–C95.
[2] Office for National Statistics, 'Cancer Statistics—Registrations, England, 2000', Series MB1.No.31.

Audiology

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average waiting time was for patients between the date of referral to an NHS audiology unit in England for a hearing assessment to an assessment taking place in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [152728]

(2) what the current waiting time is between referral and being seen by an audiologist for each NHS audiology unit in England; and if he will make a statement; [152729]

(3) what percentage of patients referred to NHS audiology units in England were fitted with *(a)* a single behind the ear hearing aid, *(b)* binaural behind the ear hearing aids, *(c)* a single in the ear hearing aid and *(d)* binaural in the ear hearing aids, in the latest period for which figures are available; [152731]

(4) what percentage of patients referred to audiology units in England were fitted with *(a)* analogue and *(b)* digital hearing aids in the latest period for which figures are available. [152732]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what figures his Department collects on the levels of funding by Government for cancer research in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* other European Union countries and *(c)* the USA. [150606]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government spent an estimated total of £190 million on cancer research in 2000–01. Figures for levels of funding by Governments in other European Union countries are not available. The budget of the United States National Cancer Institute for fiscal year 2004 is $4,770 million (£2,588 million).

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of *(a)* Government and *(b)* non-Government spending on (i) all cancer research and (ii) breast cancer research in 2003–04; what proportion of the above is for cancer prevention; and if he will make a statement. [152513]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In the NHS Cancer Plan, the government stated its commitment to increasing funds for cancer research so as to play a full part alongside its funding partners. We said that, by 2003, we would be investing an additional £20 million each year in the infrastructure for cancer research and an extra £4 million on prostate cancer research. This new funding would mean that, for the first time, Government (through the Department, the Higher Education Funding Council and the research councils) would match the current investment of the voluntary sector. In June 2002, we confirmed to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee that Government investment in cancer research had already reached the level of the charities. Nevertheless, we remain committed to investing the extra £24 million, as described in the Cancer Plan.

The International Cancer Research Portfolio database at www.cancerportfolio.org contains details of projects supported by cancer research funding organisations in the United Kingdom and the United States. Data submitted by the National Cancer Research Institute includes the research portfolios of the 15 largest Government and charitable funders of cancer research in the UK where the research was active on 1 January 2003. The database can be searched by type of cancer, area of research (including prevention), and funding organisation.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to inform men *(a)* about the known risk factors for prostate cancer and *(b)* on whether they should ask their doctor for a prostate specific antigen test. [152543]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We want men to know what their prostate is and what can go wrong with it. We have provided funding for the following to increase public awareness of prostate cancer:

Section 64 grant to the Prostate Cancer Charity to increase available information about prostate cancer.

Section 64 grant to the Prostate Cancer Charity to improve awareness of the risks and symptoms of prostate cancer in African and Afro-Caribbean men in Britain.

The database of individual patient experiences in prostate cancer.

We have also set up the Prostate Cancer Advisory Group (PCAG) to ensure better collaboration and communication between the Department, the voluntary sector, patient and professional groups and to advise Ministers, the National Cancer Director and the Department on the development of policy on prostate cancer. One of the first actions of the PCAG was the formation of a sub-group to look specifically at the public awareness of prostate cancer.

The prostate cancer risk management programme ensures that men considering a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test for prostate cancer are given information concerning the benefits, limitations and risks associated with having the test. Evidence based primary care resource packs have been provided to all GPs to aid them in counselling men who are concerned about prostate cancer, enabling the man to make an informed choice on whether to take a PSA test.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there

are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150268]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Responsibility level (grade)	*Department of Health*	*NHS Estates Agency*	*NHS Pensions Agency*	*Medicines and Health Care Regulatory Authority*	*NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency*	*Total number of staff*
Senior Civil Service	265.3	3	1	71.9	10	351.2
Level 6	160.8	22	2	55.3	12	252.1
Level 7	527.9	62	2	73.6	74.6	740.1
Senior Executive Officer	141.1	9	9	74.1	8	241.2
Higher Executive Officer	738.9	24.8	22.8	100.6	139.5	1,026.6
Executive Officer	603.3	25.6	62.8	153.9	45.3	890.9
Administrative Officer	413.2	11.5	144.5	111.2	16.8	697.2
Administrative Assistant	43.7	1.7	14.3	17.8	4.2	81.7

Notes:
1. The information in the table represents staff in post at 1 October 2003 and is the Mandate data provided to the Cabinet Office; the published data may vary. Similar information for January 1997 is not available.
2. In the publication Civil Service Statistics 1997, Table 1A, the total number of staff in post at 1 April 1997 in the Department of Health was 4,696, 1,013 of whom worked in the Department's agencies.

Commission for Health Improvement

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of the Commission for Health Improvement *(a)* in the last 12 months and *(b)* since its inception. [148825]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The budget granted for the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) for 2003–04 is £35.2 million.

Previous years figures are published in CHI's annual accounts since inception in 1999–2000. Since inception, CHI's costs total about £99 million.

Continence Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many finished consultant episodes for paediatric continence there were in each *(a)* NHS region and *(b)* strategic health authority in each of the last five years; [152824]

(2) what assessment he has made of the availability of integrated paediatric continence services. [152825]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested on finished consultant episodes has been placed in the Library. Data are not currently available by strategic health authority for all the years requested. Figures have therefore been provided based on the previous health authority and regional areas.

Information on the availability of paediatric continence services is not collected centrally.

Coronary Angiograms

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many coronary angiograms were undertaken by each NHS hospital trust in England in each of the last three years; and how many of these were *(a)* second and *(b)* third interventions. [150730]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the number of coronary angiograms that were undertaken by each National Health Service hospital trust in England has been placed in the Library.

The figures are sourced from Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health. They have suppressed numbers between one and five and used a dash to indicate "not available" for trusts that did not exist or did not provide data in any of the three years. Note that due to mergers and organisational changes, data quality varies between the trusts listed.

Information on second and third interventions is not available.

Elderly People (Malnutrition)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many elderly people were diagnosed as suffering from malnutrition in *(a)* Portsmouth and South East Hampshire and *(b)* in England, in each of the last five years; and what his Department's policy is for tackling malnutrition. [152349]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Malnourishment is caused by an imbalance of nutrients, particularly energy intake which impacts on body weight. Eating a balanced diet and keeping physically active helps people to maintain a healthy body weight.

Table 1 shows the count of finished admission episodes for national health service hospitals in Portsmouth and South East Hampshire (1998–99 to 2000–01) and Isle of White, Portsmouth and South East Hampshire where the primary diagnosis is malnutrition and the age of admission was 65 plus.

Table 1

	Finished admission episodes
1998–99	0
1999–2000	1
2000–01	1
2001–02	1
2002–03	3

Table 2 shows the count of finished admission episodes for NHS hospitals in England from 1998–99 to 2002–03 where the primary diagnosis is malnutrition and the age of admission was 65 plus.

Table 2

	Finished admission episodes
1998–99	114
1999–2000	98
2000–01	109
2001–02	128
2002–03	112

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

In the NHS Plan (2000) the Government made a commitment to reduce under nutrition by developing a hospital nutrition policy to improve the outcome of care of patients by 2004. A number of measures and strategies are in place to manage, monitor and screen patients for under nutrition in hospitals, residential care and the wider community. Nutritional screening is recommended for the care of specific groups, such as those outlined in the national service framework for older people (2001).

Fluoridation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has undertaken into the possible effects on the health of the elderly of fluoridating water. [151769]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Fluoride is ingested throughout life as a normal component of food and water. Many of the numerous published studies of the effects of fluoride in animal tests and in human populations shed light on the effects of lifetime ingestion of fluoride. They include studies on diseases which are commoner at older ages, such as cancer and hip fractures. There are no known adverse effects on health outcomes from the usual range of fluoride intakes in the United Kingdom. There is however growing evidence from a number of studies that the protection from tooth decay derived from the fluoridation of water continues into old age.

Health Statistics

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list health statistics which are collected by ethnic minority grouping. [151908]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* The Department of Health encourages ethnic data collection at the primary care level, but these data are not available centrally.

Key health statistics collected by ethnic group and publicly available are listed:

Department of Health

Health Survey for England

Hospital Episode Statistics, data are collected by ethnic group but are not publicly available

Morbidity Statistics from General Practice

NHS workforce censuses: medical and dental, non-medical

Personal Social Services User Experience Survey

Office for National Statistics

2001 Census

Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey

General Household Survey

Millennium Cohort Study

Mortality Statistics

Survey of Psychiatric Morbidity Among Prisoners

Commission for Health Improvement

National Survey of NHS Patients

Department of Work and Pensions-

Family Resource Survey

Hospital Beds (Hampshire)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS *(a)* general and *(b)* acute hospital beds there are in the (i) Portsmouth and (ii) South East Hampshire area; and how many were available (A) one year ago and (B) in 1997. [151992]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of general and acute beds is collected annually from each national health service trust and primary care trust and is published on the Department of Health website at www.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity

Information is not available for the geographical areas of Portsmouth and South East Hampshire, as data are only collected by PCT and NHS trust.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151049]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A centre of excellence was established within the Department of Health in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition-based programmes and projects. As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings. All centres of excellence are currently developing future plans, and as part of this process, measurement of savings will be defined.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether all IT hardware and software products are being properly utilised in his Department. [151054]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department of Health has outsourced support for its information technology (IT) infrastructure including desktop computers, to Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC). CSC conduct periodic audits of IT hardware and software to ensure compliance with software licensing requirements and best value for money, taking into account the total cost of ownership.

The Department of Health allows its employees and people working on behalf of the Department reasonable personal use of its IT equipment; usage is monitored in accordance with the Information Commissioner's "Code of Practice: Monitoring at Work and the

Department's Acceptable Use of IT Policy". Breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action including dismissal.

Intermediate Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people he estimates have been diverted from requiring long-term care by the provision of intermediate care in the last three years. [152816]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally. However the Department of Health has commissioned independent national research into the effectiveness of intermediate care, the results of which will be available in 2005–06.

Further information about the research projects can be obtained from the websites www.prw.le.ac.uk/intcare and www.nuffield.leeds.ac.uk.

Lottery Revenue

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total value is of Lottery revenue used to support Government-sponsored projects within his Department since 1997. [149628]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The Department has no policy or operational responsibility for distribution of National Lottery proceeds. I refer the hon. Member to the response give by my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 45W.

Medical Research (Animals)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the nature of the *(a)* financial and *(b)* other support given by Government towards the recent report by MORI, "The Use of Animals in Medical Research", on behalf of the Coalition for Medical Progress. [152615]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government contributed 50 per cent. of the cost of the 2002 MORI poll on the use of animals in medical research. This poll updated the 1999 MORI poll carried out for the Medical Research Council. The results were published on the Coalition for Medical Progress (CMP) website at www.medicalprogress.org in March 2003. No other financial support has been given to the CMP, which is funded by subscription from its members. Government Ministers have spoken at events organised by CMP to set out Government policy on the regulation of the use of animals in scientific procedures.

Memory Clinics

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to assess the adequacy of the provision of memory clinics in England. [152801]

Dr. Ladyman: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities to assess the development of these services.

Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when a decision will be made on including pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in the childhood vaccination schedule. [151314]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We do not have a firm date for when such a decision will be made, pending current research.

Prevenar

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding he has approved for the provision of the vaccine Prevenar on the national health service. [142932]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In order to make a decision about committing budgets to this vaccine we need to be certain that the vaccine is cost effective, that it can be introduced to the childhood programme safely and effectively and that we are confident of vaccine supplies. We will review the Department's spending plans when we are confident that the vaccine will deliver real benefits.

Registered Nursing Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the cost of the registered nursing care contribution in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04, *(c)* 2004–05 and *(d)* 2005–06. [152814]

Dr. Ladyman: The additional allocations for national health service funded nursing care in 2002–03 and 2003–04 were £220 million and £584 million. The proposed allocations for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are £582 million and £584 million respectively. The figure for 2002–03 relates to self-funding residents only, and the other figures relate to all eligible care home residents, including those previously supported by local councils. It is for primary care trusts to manage their obligations effectively, within the total resources available.

Sexual Health

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* radio and *(b)* television channels he has used for sexual health campaigns since he published the sexual health strategy. [151312]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The table shows the radio stations that have been used to broadcast advertisements as part of the Government's 'Sex Lottery' campaign, launched in 2002, to raise awareness of sexually transmitted infections and promote safer sex among 18 to 30-year-olds. No television channels have been used to date.

Radio station	*Area served*
96.3 Radio Aire	Leeds
95.8 Capital FM	London
Choice FM London	London
Hallam FM	Sheffield
Kiss 100 FM	London
Metro Radio	Newcastle
Key 103 (Manchester)	Manchester
TFM	Middlesborough

Radio station	Area served
96.9 Viking FM	Hull
Sunrise Radio (Greater London)	London
Invicta FM	Kent
103.2 Power FM	Southampton
Radio City 96.7 (H)	Liverpool
96.4 FM BRMB Birmingham	Birmingham
Virgin Radio (AM)	National
Galaxy 101	Severn Estuary
Galaxy 102	Manchester
Galaxy 102.2	Birmingham
Sabras Radio	Leicester
Galaxy 105	Yorkshire
104.9 XFM London	London
Vibe FM	East Anglia
Juice 107.6	Liverpool
Juice 107.2 (was Surf 107.2)	Brighton
Galaxy 105–106	North East
Capital Gold London 1548	London
GWR FM	Bristol
Friday Night Kiss	Network
Total East Anglian Radio	East Anglia
Total Plymouth Sound	Plymouth
Sunrise Yorkshire	Bradford
Asian Sound	Manchester

Statistics

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the reasons for wide variations in MRSA bacteraemia statistics between hospital trusts; and whether the variations are linked to the size of the sample numbers used. [145043]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Generally methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemia rates will be higher in trusts that care for more vulnerable patients and that undertake more invasive and high-risk specialist care. A high rate does not necessarily mean that these trusts are poor performers in either infection control or other performance measures but indicate a need for further investigation. For example large teaching hospitals may import infections when patients are transferred in for specialist care.

A proportion of bacteraemias in all types of hospital are preventable and the aim is to lower MRSA bacteraemias overall. It is important that all trusts examine their MRSA bacteraemias to assess how much is preventable and to take appropriate control measures.

The mandatory surveillance system includes all bacteraemia reports and not a representative sample. Further information on interpreting this complex dataset is available on the Department of Health website at http://www.doh.gov.uk/cmo/mrsadata/

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148627]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The report, "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service", is published annually.

It describes and comments upon the amount and type of sickness absence recorded by the Home Civil Service and its individual Departments and Agencies. The report is available on the internet at: http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/civilservice/publications/sickness/index.htm

Copies are also available in the Library.

Waiting Times

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average length of time a patient was on the waiting list for treatment for *(a)* cancer, *(b)* heart disease, *(c)* hip replacement and *(d)* liver complaints was in (i) St. Helens and Knowsley Authority, (ii) Merseyside and (iii) the North West Region in each year since 1992; [141477]

(2) how many *(a)* cancer, *(b)* heart disease, *(c)* hip replacement and *(d)* liver complaint patients resident in St. Helens were on a waiting list for treatment in each year since 1992. [141478]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures on the average waiting times are not available. The information requested on the number of people waiting for treatment is shown in the following table. Data specifically on liver disease and hip replacement are not collected centrally.

		Specialty	
	Organisation	Cardiology	Clinical oncology
1993–94	St. Helens and Knowsley District Health Authority	120	8
1994–95	St. Helens and Knowsley District Health Authority	133	12
1995–96	St. Helens and Knowsley District Health Authority	n/a	n/a
1996–97	St. Helens and Knowsley Health Authority	103	5
1997–98	St. Helens and Knowsley Health Authority	188	4
1998–99	St. Helens and Knowsley Health Authority	179	2
1999–2000	St. Helens and Knowsley Health Authority	200	5
2000–01	St. Helens and Knowsley Health Authority	125	3
2001–02	St. Helens and Knowsley Health Authority	303	5
2002–03	St. Helens PCT	217	4
2002–03	Knowsley PCT	184	3

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 9 February 2004

CABINET OFFICE

Chief Information Officer

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when the Chief Information Officer will be appointed; what the responsibilities of the post will be; and what its reporting relationship will be to *(a)* other civil servants and *(b)* Ministers. [151475]

Mr. Alexander: The new Head of e-Government (analogous to a private-sector Chief Information Officer) will be based in the Cabinet Office and will report to the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Andrew Turnbull and Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The responsibilities of the post were set out in a press notice of 15 December 2003 which can be found at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/news/2003/031215 headofegovt.asp. I will also place a copy of the notice in the Libraries of the House for the interest of Members.

The detailed timetable for the recruitment exercise has still to be finalised, but the aim is to complete the selection process by April 2004.

Civil Contingencies

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will take steps to give one co-ordinating body full responsibility for civil contingencies covering all multi-agency aspects. [153043]

Mr. Alexander: The Home Secretary has overall charge for UK resilience and chairs the Ministerial Committee responsible for providing co-ordination and oversight covering all multi-agency aspects. Sir David Omand, the Security and Intelligence Co-ordinator, is responsible for the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, and supports the Home Secretary in this work.

Civil Servants

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what research has been carried out since 1997 into the reasons civil servants leave the Civil Service; and if he will make a statement. [153704]

Mr. Alexander: My Department publishes aggregate data on causes for leaving the Civil Service in the annual publication "Civil Service Statistics". Copies are placed in the Library of the House and can be accessed at www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics.

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost of recruitment of civil servants was for each financial year from 1996 to the present, broken down by Department. [153705]

Mr. Alexander: Departments have delegated responsibility for almost all recruitment to the Civil Service. The Cabinet Office does not collect centrally the information requested and could only do so at disproportionate cost.

Consultations

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list those individuals and organisations *(a)* to whom (i) his Department, (ii) its executive agencies and (iii) the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultations (A) Private action, public benefit: A review of charities and the wider not for profit sector, (B) The future of emergency planning in England and Wales: a discussion document and (C) Towards equality and diversity: implementing the employment and race directives and *(b)* from whom each received a response in each case. [151655]

Mr. Alexander: The Government are committed to ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are identified and involved in consultation exercises.

The Strategy Unit report "Private Action, Public Benefit" was published on 25 September 2002. More than 1,000 copies were sent to interested parties. A further 300 people were sent e-mail links to the document. The pdf version of the SU report has been downloaded more than 45,000 times from the SU website: www.strategy.gov.uk.

Following publication of the report, members of the SU project team and the Home Office's Active Community Unit took part in more than 50 consultation events around the country. Copies of the report were also distributed at these events.

Responses were received from around 1,100 individuals and organisations. A summary of their comments—and the Government's response to the report—are contained in the Home Office document "Charities and Not-for-Profits: A Modern Legal Framework", published in July 2003.

The following organisations were sent copies of "The future of emergency planning in England and Wales: a discussion document".

Local Government Association (LGA)
Local Authorities in England and Wales
Emergency Planning Society (EPS)
Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)
Police Forces in England and Wales
British Transport Police
Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA)
Fire Brigades in England and Wales
Ambulance Service Association (ASA)
Ambulance Service in England and Wales
Health Authorities
Coroners Offices and Pathology Service
Northern Ireland Executive
Scottish Executive
National Assembly for Wales
Other Government Departments
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Environment Agency
Government Offices for the Regions
OFWAT
OFTEL
OFGEM
Rail Regulators
CAA, UK Airlines EP Group and Airports
Educational Establishments
The Armed Forces

Responses were received from interested stakeholder groups, including:

Local Authorities
Emergency Services
Health Bodies
Utilities
Transport
Professional Bodies
Lobby Groups
Academic Institutes
Multi-Agency Groups
Private Companies
Individuals

I have placed a full list of responses in the Libraries of the House.

"Towards equality and diversity: implementing the employment and race directives" is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148638]

Mr. Alexander: It is not possible to obtain this information without incurring disproportionate costs.

Cabinet Office is committed to managing sick absence effectively. It has in place robust procedures that reflect the recommendations of the 1998 report "Working Well Together—Managing Attendance in the Public Sector". These are supported by comprehensive in-house guidance and training for managers and individuals. The department is making good progress towards its target for reduced sickness absence of 30 per cent. in 2010 compared with 1998 levels.

Strategy Unit Fisheries Report

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost of the Strategy Unit's report on the UK fishing industry was; how many copies of the report will be produced; how many people have worked on the project; and when the report will be made public. [153992]

Mr. Alexander: The project is still ongoing. The Strategy Unit's budget for this financial year is £4.7 million, which funds a range of projects and other work.

The normal print run for Strategy Unit reports is 2,000, though the report and supporting documents will also be on the Strategy Unit website.

A total of 12 people worked on the project, and six of these were engaged on a full-time basis.

The report will be published shortly.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Communications Regulation

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what arrangements she has put in place for *(a)* monitoring and *(b)* reducing the administrative costs of communications regulation through (i) the running costs of Ofcom and (ii) the compliance costs of business. [153035]

Estelle Morris: Parliament has given Ofcom a large degree of financial autonomy appropriate to its independent status. That is normal with sectoral regulators and especially important in media regulation. Nevertheless it is also subject to a number of measures to ensure proper scrutiny of its expenditure, and that its own costs, and the compliance costs of regulated businesses, are no more than necessary to fulfil its statutory duties under the Communications Act 2003.

Ofcom is required to set its charges in a transparent way and justify them to industry. In exercising all its statutory functions, Ofcom is also required to have due regard, among other things, to the desirability of encouraging investment and innovation, and to the principles of good regulation such as consultation, proportionality and selectivity—all of which are very relevant to compliance costs and overall expenditure. In addition, where it plans to introduce significant new regulation, Ofcom is required to carry out and publish an assessment of the likely impact of the measure, allowing a period for consultation, and to take account of responses to it.

Furthermore, Ofcom must produce an annual report and accounts (the latter subject to certification and report by the Comptroller and Auditor General) to be laid before Parliament; its activities can be scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee and the relevant departmental Parliamentary Select Committees, and by the National Audit Office; its use of public funds is governed by, among other things, a financial memorandum agreed with the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry and for Culture, Media and Sport; and its expenditure is subject to resource 'caps' agreed with HM Treasury.

Lottery

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding Cunninghame, South has received from National Lottery grants in each of the past five years. [153216]

Estelle Morris: In the last five years, starting from 1 January 1999. Cunninghame, South has been awarded grants to the value of:

	Amount awarded (£)
1999	1,320,060
2000	195,087
2001	746,145
2002	986,707
2003	1,753,870
Total	5,001,869

These numbers are derived from the Department's database of lottery awards, which is based on information supplied by the distributing bodies.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total sales were for National Lottery tickets in Cunninghame, South, in each of the past five years. [153217]

Estelle Morris: The available information is set out in a table prepared by Camelot, listing sales of National Lottery tickets by postcode area since the Lottery's launch, The table was placed in the Libraries of both Houses on 9 December 2003 in response to a written parliamentary question from the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Jones) on 18 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 764.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total sales of National Lottery tickets in *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Lancashire were in each of the past five years. [153855]

Estelle Morris: The available information is set out in a table prepared by Camelot, listing sales of National Lottery tickets by postcode area since the Lottery's launch. The table was placed in the Libraries of both Houses on 9 December 2003 in response to a written parliamentary question from the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Jones) on 18 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 764.

Transmitter Mast (Worksop)

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the transmitter mast in Worksop will be upgraded so the local residents can receive Freeview. [152370]

Estelle Morris: Broadcasters, through contracts with transmission operators, are responsible for maintaining the terrestrial network. But until the analogue signals are turned off, there will not be enough frequencies available to enable all the transmitters to carry digital terrestrial services. We believe that digital switchover could be achieved between 2006 and 2010, subject to our affordability and availability criteria being met, but we can't be more precise at this stage about which transmitters will be converted by any given date.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research he has commissioned into abuses of human rights in Bangladesh, with particular reference to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. [153524]

Hilary Benn: DFID and the FCO actively monitor human rights in Bangladesh and take account of the concerns of marginalised communities through research related to funding development programmes. HMG and our post in Dhaka are aware of the concerns over the pressure being put on the Ahmadiyyas. The FCO has raised these concerns on several occasions, most importantly through the EU Troika, with senior officials of the Foreign Ministry and with senior MPs of the ruling party. Gareth Thomas, PUSS, raised the issue of Human Rights with the Minister of Foreign Affairs during his visit to Bangladesh in late January.

Iraq

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* aid and *(b)* compensation is available for residents of Baghdad whose properties were destroyed by American rockets in the war. [152537]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

Questions of aid or compensation by other coalition partners are a matter for them.

Tuberculosis

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of UK overseas aid in 2003–04 goes towards combating tuberculosis. [152974]

Hilary Benn: The UK plays a major role in combating tuberculosis worldwide through its support for Global Partnerships, such as the Global Fund, and country programmes. Our strategy is to ensure a more coordinated and collaborative international and national effort in TB control. Much of our assistance is given through support to country health sector programmes or as General Budget Support to developing countries. We give significant core contributions to international agencies such as the World Health Organisation, some of which is used to tackle the disease. As a result it is not possible to disaggregate our bilateral expenditure on tuberculosis in the manner requested.

SCOTLAND

Whisky

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland pursuant to his answer of 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 757W, on the whisky industry, what previous meetings he has had with representatives of the Scottish whisky industry; and what representations he has made to the Treasury on the impact of introducing a tax strip for the sector. [153934]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a wide range of issues affecting Scotland.

Aside from the meetings referred to in my answer of 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 757W, Scotland Office, Ministers have had no other formal meetings with representatives of the Scotch whisky industry.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pensions

17. **Mr. Joyce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to help people make informed choices about their pensions in retirement. [153189]

Malcolm Wicks: The recent Command Paper CM6111 "Simplicity, security and choice: Informed Choices for working and saving", published on 3 February 2004, sets out our programme to help people make informed decisions about retirement. The strategy that I have set out is based around three steps—activation, education and information. We are determined to:

Enable people to make the most of pension provision and encourage availability of the right pension products;

Raise people's awareness of their options and improve financial education; and Ensure that everyone has high-quality, accurate and timely information.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the effect on expenditure on the basic state pension in each of the next five years of ascribing to all persons below state pension age a full year's national insurance contributions in lieu of their actual contributions in all future years. [150456]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is in the table.

£ million

	Additional expenditure on basic state pension
2005–06	20
2006–07	50
2007–08	100
2008–09	160
2009–10	220

Notes:

1. The costs for the first few years are shown and are very low because they relate to current public expenditure. The effect on the underlying fiscal position is larger because future public spending liabilities are being increased in respect of people of all ages.
2. The costs given are the gross costs to the nearest £10 million, in 2003–04 price terms, using 2004 benefit rates.
3. The costs assume that the first year for which the contributions will be credited is 2004–05.
4. The costs take into account that men aged 60 to 64 are automatically awarded national insurance credits for those years irrespective of whether they are in work or not. These credits count towards state pension entitlement.

Unemployment Action Teams

19. **Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the role of action teams in reducing unemployment. [153191]

Mr. Browne: Action teams are having a positive impact on the lives of disadvantaged people, in some of the most economically deprived areas of the country, and have already been successful in helping nearly 100,000 people into work.

I would like to thank my hon. Friend for the consistent support he has shown for the action team operating in his constituency, which has helped nearly 1,000 disadvantaged people across North West Wales into work, contributing to the fall in unemployment in his constituency of 41 per cent. since 1997.

Working Tax Credit

20. **Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the application of working tax credit to *(a)* parents with care and *(b)* absent parents. [153192]

Mr. Pond: In the new scheme only the non-resident parent's income is taken into account; the parent with care's income is ignored.

In the old scheme a parent with care who receives working tax credit is treated as having no assessable income.

Generally speaking, in both schemes, a non-resident parent's working tax credit counts as income. (The exception is where his current partner is the principal earner).

New Deal

21. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent representations he has received on the impact of the new deal for young people on the level of economic inactivity among young people. [153193]

Mr. Browne: We have received a number of representations from hon. Members, through Parliamentary Questions and correspondence.

I am happy to say that our new deal for young people programme has been hugely successful in helping to virtually eradicate long-term youth unemployment, helping more than 460,000 young people into work, including nearly 400 in the hon. Member's constituency.

Independent evaluation shows that the new deal has not only helped to increase youth employment, but has also benefited the economy to the tune of £500 million a year.

Pensioners

22. **Mr. Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of pensioners are entitled to means-tested benefits. [153194]

Mr. Pond: We estimate that around half of all pensioner households across Great Britain are eligible for Pension Credit and other income related benefits and stand to gain on average £400 a year. Our priority is to target money on the poorest pensioners and there are already 1.4 million pensioner households on Pension Credit who are getting more money than they did before.

The way we are assessing pensioners' incomes in Pension Credit is vastly different from the stigmatising weekly means tests of the past. We want all those pensioners who are eligible to apply for their entitlement. It would be a great shame if the phrase 'means-test' was allowed to get in the way of pensioners applying for what is rightfully theirs.

Departmental Files (Security)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to enhance the security of files in departmental file stores. [153188]

Mr. Browne: Currently, satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure the security of files in DWP file stores operated by both departmental staff and our external supplier. The future contractual arrangements for delivery of this service, which we expect to announce soon, will take full account of the need to maintain security of information and the physical security of departmental files. We will closely manage and monitor the new contract to ensure that this remains the case.

Departmental Leaflets

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria his Department uses when deciding whether a leaflet which it publishes is to be made available only on its website. [149558]

Mr. Browne: The Department for Work and Pensions does not produce any leaflets or other publications in web-only format at present.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many permanent staff have left and not been replaced in his Department's offices in *(a)* Portsmouth, *(b)* Southampton and *(c)* the Isle of Wight in each of the last three years. [151632]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is in the table.

	2001–02[1]		*2002–03*[1]		*2003 to date*[2]	
	Staff leaving	*Staff recruited*	*Staff leaving*	*Staff recruited*	*Staff leaving*	*Staff recruited*
Portsmouth	24	34	52	35	34	3
Southampton	20	32	40	17	40	11
Isle of Wight	4	46	14	34	8	14

[1] 2001–02 and 2002–03 figures are from 1 April to 31 March.
[2] 2003 figures are from 1 April to 30 November.
Note:
Figures are for Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service, Child Support Agency and Corporate Centre staff based in the offices in question.
Source:
FAMIS/Rebus data extracts

Housing Benefit Department (Swale)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what additional resources he will offer to resolve the on-going problems in the housing benefit department at Swale Borough Council. [153728]

Mr. Pond: The Government are investing £200 million over this and the next two financial years to help local authorities make improvements in their administration of housing benefit. Swale Borough Council has been awarded funding for a training officer post, and we will be pleased to consider additional bids from the council.

In addition, and in recognition of the problems experienced by Swale Borough Council the Department has provided free consultancy assistance from its Help Team.

The Help Team worked with the council for six weeks during the period 29 September 2003 to 12 December 2003. During that time assistance was provided to the council in the development of a project plan to clear its backlog of outstanding benefits work. In addition, work was also undertaken on the introduction of a communications strategy, a review of existing policies and procedures plus a review of how benefits work and staff are organised.

Work in all these areas is continuing and is being regularly monitored by the Help Team. The results of this monitoring show that the council has made good progress in clearing its backlog of work and is currently ahead of its target for full clearance.

Post Office Accounts

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on progress in moving manual pension payments to direct payment, with particular reference to Post Office accounts. [153631]

Mr. Pond: The overall move to direct payment is progressing well.

The conversion process, from manual payments to payments credited directly in to bank accounts, started with invitation letters being sent to some customers in October 2002 and involves contacting approximately 14.25 million customers. We have already written to 8 million customers and so far over 3.5 million have provided their bank account details, and over 2 million have requested a Post Office card account.

Key figures on the progress of conversion to direct payment are available in the Library, updated every four weeks.

Winter Fuel Payment

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of pensioners entitled to

the winter fuel payment in *(a)* Norfolk and *(b)* Great Britain had received the payment by (i) 1 January and (ii) 20 January; and if he will make a statement. [153033]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to provide payment figures separately for Norfolk. Neither can we provide an estimate of the percentage of eligible people in receipt of a winter fuel payment using DWP administrative data because we do not have complete information on household circumstances and payments are based on household composition.

By 1 January 11,570,389 winter fuel payments had been made in Great Britain for winter 2003–04. This figure had not changed at 20 January.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Cod

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the effect of the extension piece on a demersal trawl on the selectivity of the cod end. [150920]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the 2001 Fishing Industry/Science partnership funded by SEERAD, trials were carried out with a pair seine team to assess the effect of very long extensions on catch composition. Two cases were investigated using the alternate haul method; one with an extension of 200 meshes, the other of 500 meshes long. No significant differences were found in the catches or discards for haddock or whiting. No significant amounts of juvenile cod were retained.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria her Department uses when deciding whether a leaflet which it publishes is to be made available only on its website. [149555]

Alun Michael: Leaflets and other printed material are normally made available in electronic form via Defra's website, at the same time as they are published or circulated. Where documents are only published via the website (and not in printed form), this is based on an assessment of factors such as the audience for the document, the nature of the material and its anticipated lifetime, whether speed of distribution electronically is particularly important, and cost-efficiency issues.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of whether the behaviour of fish species is constant, with particular reference to escape strategies when confronted with a towed trawl. [150901]

Mr. Bradshaw: Fish reaction depends on the fish species, individual physiology, swimming capacity and condition. Throughout the capture process, the density of fish will be important in determining the reaction of individual fish. The environmental conditions such as temperature, light conditions and seabed type will also have an effect. Fishing gear will also influence fish reaction, mainly through the visual stimuli it creates relative to the background. These fundamental mechanisms of fish reaction may be relatively constant whereas individual reactions will be determined entirely by the particular circumstances to which a fish is subjected at any given moment.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs where the primary *(a)* sandeel, *(b)* cod and *(c)* haddock fisheries in the North Sea are. [149134]

Mr. Bradshaw: Sandeel fishing occurs on grounds where sediment type and oceanography facilitate high concentrations of sandeels. These grounds mainly occur on the western edge of the Dogger Bank, and around the Fisher Bank. A sandeel fishing area off the Firth of Forth is currently closed.

Cod fishing is more widespread. It occurs in the Southern Bight from the eastern Channel to the Dutch coast, off north east coast England from the Humber to Tyne, in part of the German Bight, and in a wide arc from the Skagerrak along the edge of the Norwegian trench to the northern North Sea and the waters east and west of Orkney and Shetland.

Haddock fishing is also widespread, from the Skagerrak to a large part of the northern North Sea, down the western side of the North Sea from Shetland and Orkney to the east coast of Scotland, as far as north east England. Haddock are sparse south of the Dogger Bank.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the significance is of the catch per unit effort index; and what part it plays in estimating fish stocks. [150247]

Mr. Bradshaw: Catch per unit of fishing effort is an index that is approximately proportional to the abundance of the fishable stock. A time series of such data could describe stock trends, provided that the index is representative of the whole stock, and is not biased by year to year changes in vessel efficiency, selectivity, or fishing strategy. Such bias can affect the catch per effort of commercial vessels, whereas the index derived from research surveys that fish standard stations using a standard gear year on year is not affected in this way, and is therefore more suitable for tuning ICES stock assessments.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what techniques are available to fishermen to *(a)* minimise the catch of juvenile fish and *(b)* maximise the size of fish caught in demersal trawls. [150249]

Mr. Bradshaw: For optimal stock exploitation each species needs to be caught at a particular size and age, dependent mainly on its growth rate and maturity. The exploitation rate for each species is determined by the design of the gear used to fish it as well as the effort exerted on the stock. Technical Conservation Measures regulating the design of gear are the main method of limiting the catch of juvenile fish. Such controls are imposed by limits on codend mesh size and twine size, the number of open meshes around the codend circumference, the use of lifting bags, the length of

extension and the use of attachments. Also selective devices such as square mesh panels and grids may be mandatory.

Limits on the capture of larger fish are imposed by restrictions on effort or quotas. It is not necessarily optimal to take the largest fish from the sea as these may be the most successful reproductively.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* visual and *(b)* aural devices attached to trawls to improve the selectivity of fishing in demersal fisheries; [150250]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the relative importance of *(a)* aural and *(b)* visual triggers in the escape responses of ground fish in relation to the approach of a towed trawl. [150898]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since the 1950s, studies have shown that vision is very important in determining fish reaction to gears at all stages of the capture process. A variety of experiments have been carried out at the FRS Marine Laboratory, for example on horizontal panels to separate species within a trawl or the use of different coloured twine in escape panels. These studies suggest that when used appropriately, and under certain circumstances (i.e. where light levels are sufficient for the fish to react) such visual devices can subtly improve selectivity. A review is currently being compiled through the ICES Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour Working Group of the reactions and behaviour of fish to visual components of fishing gears and the effect on catchability in survey and commercial fishing gears.

Reactions of fish to aural stimuli are less clear although it is thought that,when they hear threatening sounds, fish adopt a state of heightened awareness such that they may be more ready to react to subsequent visual cues. There has been little research on the use of aural devices to improve selectivity.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessments her Department has made of the effectiveness of turned-mesh netting in *(a)* improving the escape rate of juvenile fish and *(b)* reducing the attendant mortality; and what the operational disadvantages are of such netting. [150252]

Mr. Bradshaw: Turned mesh netting is standard diamond mesh turned through 90°. Because of the way the twine is knotted, turned meshes tend to remain wider open when under longitudinal tension than standard meshes. Knot slippage and mesh distortion may occur but these problems might be overcome by heat setting the knots or using double knots. Experiments in the Baltic have suggested that selectivity is improved when using turned mesh netting, i.e. more juvenile fish escape. No long-term trials have been carried out in the North Sea on these options although Seafish Industry Authority are planning trials in 2004 on the use of turned mesh in prawn trawl codends.

In April 2004, an ICES Working Group will examine all the recent experimental data from the Baltic on turned mesh selectivity to assess the effect of this netting type. The findings will be published. No information is available on the mortality of escapees from such netting.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the effect of *(a)* square knotless netting and *(b)* knotted diamond-mesh netting used for escape panels on (i) different species, (ii) the proportion of escapees and (iii) the mortality of escapees. [150253]

Mr. Bradshaw: Square mesh netting is often used in escape panels because diamond mesh netting closes under tension. Diamond mesh netting can be used as square mesh netting by turning it through 45°. However, in these circumstances the knots in knotted netting are liable to slip unless specially treated, leading to distortion of the meshes. Certain types of knotless netting have been found to be more stable. Legislation allows either knotted or knotless netting as long as knot slippage does not occur. No information is available comparing the selective properties or the resulting escape mortality of these two netting types used in escape panels.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what facilities exist in the United Kingdom for flume-tank testing of trawl designs to improve the selectivity of fishing; and what facilities exist in *(a)* Europe and *(b)* the USA for this purpose. [150294]

Mr. Bradshaw: At their Fisheries Development Centre in Hull the Seafish Industry Authority operate the only flume tank in the UK. Similar flume tanks exist in Hirtshals (Denmark), Lorient and Boulogne (France) and St. Johns (Canada). Trawl designs can be tested at towing tank facilities at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA).

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what evaluation her Department has made of the suitability of Baltic panels of *(a)* Danish and *(b)* Swedish design in North Sea fisheries. [150295]

Mr. Bradshaw: A sub-group of the ICES Working Group on Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour reported on the selectivity of these Baltic panels in comparison with standard diamond mesh codends in 1995 and 1996. A comprehensive study of the selectivity of these devices was also conducted as part of the EU-funded 'Bacoma' project and published in 2000. It was found that selectivity for cod was better when the panels were placed in the top panel of the codend. A later joint UK and Danish project was funded by the EU to compare the selective performance of both side and top panels in North Sea fisheries. Cod and haddock selectivity was either as good or better with the top panels.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what she estimates the *(a)* minimum and *(b)* expected cod by-catch would be from vessels operating in mixed cod and haddock fisheries, using selective gear (i) designed and (ii) adapted to minimise the cod catch. [150299]

Mr. Bradshaw: A range of designs of selective gear could be used to reduce the cod catch in mixed cod and haddock fisheries. The choice of design will depend on the mix of species on the grounds, the species targeted by the fishermen and practical issues such as ease of

handling. Seldom are only cod and haddock caught. A fisherman will choose a design that is practical and gives him an economic return in terms of catch composition for his particular market. In each fishery (e.g. English, Irish, Scottish, Danish, French or Norwegian) fishermen will make different choices of gear design.

An EU-funded project (Recovery) involving most countries bordering the North Sea is currently developing such gears for several mixed species fisheries in the North Sea (Scottish whitefish, Danish whitefish, English Nephrops and Netherlands/Belgian beam trawl fisheries). The industries in each country are involved closely in these projects through industry liaison groups.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what effect oil and gas *(a)* rigs and *(b)* pipelines in the North Sea have on the distribution of (i) cod and (ii) other demersal species. [150309]

Mr. Bradshaw: Cod, other gadoid fish, and some shellfish, appear to be attracted to pipelines, thus creating higher density aggregations that attract fishermen. Cod may also be attracted to the vicinity of rigs, from which fishermen are excluded.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department has commissioned studies to determine the significance of differences in catch ability between *(a)* survey trawl gear and *(b)* commercial trawl gear, with particular reference to catches of monkfish. [150310]

Mr. Bradshaw: Studies to determine the significance of differences between survey trawl gear and commercial trawl gear have not been commissioned as these gears are used for different purposes.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made on the *(a)* development and *(b)* testing of the Eurogrid project; what findings have been released; and what the cost is of the United Kingdom contribution to this project. [150311]

Mr. Bradshaw: A whitefish grid system, the Eurogrid, suitable for use on board most North Sea trawlers for demersal towed gear fisheries has been developed and tested. The grid is made of polyamide, a material selected for high elasticity and strength.

To investigate the selective properties of the Eurogrid, experiments were conducted onboard commercial fishing vessels in all five participating countries (Denmark, France, Norway, Scotland and Sweden). The experiments covered four different species (cod, haddock, whiting, saithe) and five different bar distances. Efforts were made to determine the effective selectivity of the compound gear, consisting of both grid and codend combined, as well as individual components.

The large variability of vessel and gear sizes, deck layout and gear handling methods between individual national fleets necessitated the use of different experimental designs for measuring selectivity. These differences meant that no final conclusions could be drawn as to the selective properties of the Eurogrid compared to a standard 100 mm diamond meshed codend. However, the results indicate that they are similar to those of other sorting grids used in bottom trawl.

The user-friendliness of the Eurogrid (the low weight, flexibility and ability to be wound around a net drum) makes this a good option in fisheries where grids may be made mandatory. Alternatively it could be used on a voluntary basis. To accompany the final report an installation manual explaining to each fishing industry how the grid is fitted into the gear is available in each of the five languages, together with a short videotape describing the project. In the UK the final design of Eurogrid was featured on the Fisheries Research Services (Marine Laboratory) stand at Fishing 2003 in the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow. A paper summarising the final report is currently being prepared for a refereed scientific publication.

The United Kingdom contributed a total of £323,212 to this project, but this was offset by income of £190,000 from the EU under the 5th Framework programme of research.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received from *(a)* fishermen and *(b)* their representatives on the accuracy of scientific assessments of the levels of fish stocks; and what assessment she has made of alternative modelling paradigms from non-International Council for the Exploration of the Sea sources. [150316]

Mr. Bradshaw: Some claim that the assessment methods underestimate the amount of fish in depleted stocks subject to recovery plans, although some also appear to accept the results of the same methods applied to stocks that are either stable or increasing. An alternative 'paradigm', which is not about stock assessment but about how stocks should be managed, has been considered, but we do not accept that in the ocean the remedy to over-fishing is to fish even harder.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether cod migration occurs from the North Sea to the Atlantic fisheries; and whether migration is increased by inter-species competition and pressure on food supplies. [150475]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no scientific evidence that cod move out into the Atlantic fishing areas, or that migrations have been affected by food availability or inter-specific competition.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the factors that determine whether a fish species will predate on its own spawn; and what measures can be taken to avoid this in commercial fisheries. [150477]

Mr. Bradshaw: Some species eat the eggs of other fish species, but the literature provides no evidence from around the UK that self-predation of spawn is a significant factor affecting commercial marine species with pelagic eggs.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what evidence her Department has collated on migration of cod stocks *(a)* to and *(b)* from the North Sea, and (i) to and (ii) from International Council for the Exploration of the Seas areas IVa and IVb; and what assessment she has made of whether all cod stocks exhibit similar migration patterns. [150486]

Mr. Bradshaw: Tagging experiments have demonstrated that mature cod aggregate in numerous parts of the North Sea during the winter spawning season, and disperse later to occupy more widely distributed feeding grounds in summer. Most cod stocks exhibit broadly similar annual movement patterns, but their distance and complexity differ considerably between stocks.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what powers Fisheries Regional Advisory Committees will have *(a)* to decide on the regional total allowable catches for their areas and *(b)* to designate technical conservation measures; and what enforcement powers they will have. [152169]

Mr. Bradshaw: Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) will be advisory bodies and will not at the outset have the power to take management decisions. Nevertheless, they will develop and prove themselves over time. Subject to a review, the role of RACs may strengthen in the future, but any extension of their powers would need to be agreed by Council on the basis of a Commission proposal.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the risk to porpoises in UK waters from fixed seabed fishing nets; and if she will make a statement. [151988]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have carried out extensive research into the by-catch of harbour porpoises in set net fisheries. This research is set our in detail in the UK Small Cetacean By-catch Response Strategy published last year along with recommendations for action to reduce by-catch in these fisheries. I hope to make an announcement shortly on the implementation of this strategy.

However, to be effective, action to address the by-catch problem is required on the part of all EU member states involved in the fisheries concerned, not just the UK. Discussions are currently taking place on European Commission proposals to protect dolphins and porpoises from injury or death in fishing gear.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with *(a)* the European Commission and *(b)* her European Union counterparts on the protection of dolphins from by-catch by trawler nets; and if she will make a statement. [152004]

Mr. Bradshaw: The importance of reducing dolphin and other small cetacean by-catch has been raised by the UK at ministerial level with the Fisheries Commissioner on a number of occasions and bilaterally with France. In particular, the UK has pressed for the introduction of a observer programme across the EU to broaden the information available about which fisheries, and which vessels, are involved in the dolphin by-catch problem.

The Commission published, on 24 July 2003, a draft Council regulation concerning the incidental by-catch of cetaceans in fisheries. Discussions on this proposal are currently under way at official level.

Defra is also continuing to fund work on the deployment of a separator grid to reduce dolphin by-catch in the offshore pair trawl fishery for bass. These trials have demonstrated that separator grids could provide the means to minimise dolphin by-catch in this fishery and the results of this research are being shared with European colleagues.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many salt water fisheries survey vessels, operating in home waters, carry out work for or on behalf of her Department. [149141]

Mr. Bradshaw: CEFAS Lowestoft uses two salt water research vessels for fish stock surveys. In addition, under the devolved administrations, stock surveys are carried out by two salt water research vessels in Scotland (SEERAD/FRS), and one research vessel in Northern Ireland (DARDNI). The work of the various vessels is co-ordinated nationally and internationally.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was spent on fisheries survey vessels carrying out work for or on behalf of her Department in each of the last five financial years. [149142]

Mr. Bradshaw: The costs of the sea-days used for the several regional surveys of fish stocks carried out by the CEFAS Lowestoft research vessels were as follows:

Financial year	*£ million*
1998–99	1.09
1999–2000	1.02
2000–01	1.25
2001–02	1.73
2000–03	1.51

This does not include the cost of other sea-going studies by CEFAS vessels.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the implications are of fish categorised as grey fish being landed for the *(a)* accuracy of catch landing data and *(b)* estimation of fish stocks. [150921]

Mr. Bradshaw: Landings are an important factor in calculating fish mortality (the amount of fish taken from the sea) which forms an integral part of stock assessment.

The amount of fish discarded at sea is another factor. The quality of data will impact on forecasting certainty and scientific advice on the state of fish stocks. It does not follow however that higher than recorded landings mean that individual fish stocks are in a healthier state.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the amount by which it would be safe to increase haddock quotas in *(a)* tonnage and *(b)* percentage terms above 2003 levels in ICES areas IVa and IVb if other fish stocks were disregarded. [150855]

Mr. Bradshaw: For this stock, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) expresses the single species exploitation boundary as the precautionary level of fishing effort (Fpa). ICES did not make a specific forecast for 2004 because of the difficulty of estimating the biomass levels due to uncertainty about recent landings data. It would not, in any case, be safe to disregard other fish stocks in setting haddock quotas.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the impact of coastal erosion on the safety of coastally-sited nuclear power stations; and if she will make a statement on the *(a)* cost and *(b)* effectiveness of measures being taken in relation to this issue. [152970]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The Health and safety Executive (HSE) license all nuclear power stations under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965. Flood risks, which are enhanced by coastal erosion, are one category of external hazards that HSE require to be addressed in safety cases for nuclear plant.

Safety cases are prepared by the plant operator. They are scrutinised and then reviewed periodically (at intervals not greater than 10 years) by HSE. This provides an opportunity to ensure that operators are updating their predictions. The cost of HSE reviewing safety cases is recovered from the industry.

The Office of Science and Technology (OST) is currently performing a major study on the future of flooding and coastal erosion as part of its Foresight programme. The study is looking 30–100 years ahead and is considering the drivers of future risks from flooding and coastal erosion; the magnitude of those risks if existing policies remain unchanged; and possible policy choices which could mitigate future risks.

The project has evaluated future erosion rates and has found that these are likely to increase in many parts of the UK, although the changes will be very location specific, and are likely to be extremely variable. The project has noted that major assets and infrastructure, including certain nuclear power stations, are on stretches of the coast where the increased erosion could be substantial. However the precise change in risk of such coastal assets will be very dependant on the details of the location. Such analysis is beyond the scope of the project. The Foresight project is due to report its findings in April 2004.

Rural White Paper

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the progress her Department has made in implementing the Rural White Paper. [152617]

Alun Michael: The recent review of progress on implementation shows that considerable progress has been made on the programme set out in the Rural White Paper. The creation of Defra, with a clear remit for rural policy, and a Cabinet Committee on Rural regeneration has strengthened the rural agenda significantly.

Copies of the recent White Paper Review are available in the Library of the House. It show that the vision continues to command widespread support. Evidence from our Rural Research Centre—established by Defra and led by Birkbeck College—provides a clean and firm basis for refreshing our rural policy.

Progress in delivering the commitments in the Rural White Paper is set out at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/ruralwp/timetable.htm. The present plan shows progress to 31 August 2003. An updated plan showing progress to 31 December 2003 will shortly be on the Defra website at the same address.

Details of the Rural White Paper Review can be seen at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/rwpreview/default.htm

Further information about the Rural Research Centre is available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2004/ruralwhite-0104.htm

Scottish White Fish Fleet

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what measures may be taken, in terms of gear design, to enhance selectivity when fishing in a mixed white fish fishery to *(a)* optimise the haddock catch, and *(b)* minimise the cod by-catch; [149120]

(2) what escape strategy is adopted by *(a)* cod and *(b)* haddock in the North Sea grounds when confronted by a trawl net; [149139]

(3) what technical measures, in terms of fishing gear design and operating procedures, can be applied to minimise cod by-catch in prawn fisheries; [150297]

(4) what assessment her Department has made of raised footrope trawls as a means of reducing cod by-catch in mixed fisheries where the target species is haddock. [150488]

Mr. Bradshaw: Considerable research is going on in Europe to find solutions to the mixed fishery problem. Depending on the season and area, species such as cod, haddock, whiting, saithe, flatfish and Nephrops can be caught at the same time. In the waters round the UK, different solutions in terms of gear design may be required in Scottish, Irish, English or Danish fisheries, depending on the species present and their commercial importance to the fishermen.

Observations of fish reactions in and around trawls by research scientists have shown that there are species specific behaviours and characteristics which may provide mechanisms for separation or exclusion.

Haddock and, to a lesser extent, whiting tend to rise in the mouth of a trawl as they tire. Cod, flatfish, monkfish and Nephrops keep low. Raising the footrope of the trawl or the use of semi-pelagic fishing gear may allow cod to escape under the net but other species may also be lost.

The European Commission is currently funding two major research projects which aim to find solutions in mixed whitefish fisheries and in mixed whitefish/Nep/irops fisheries in the North Sea and Irish Sea. A key feature of this work is the close collaboration between fishermen's organisations, commercial skippers, netmakers and the UK fisheries institutes. The aim is to create solutions to these complex problems which are effective, practical, enforceable and acceptable to fishermen.

Sudden Oak Death

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to ensure that plant and timber imports are free from sudden oak death. [149113]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Plant Health (Great Britain) Order 1993 (SI 1993/1320, as amended) sets out the controls on the import, movement and keeping of plants within the EU. The Order requires all plants entering the UK from third countries to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate and are subject to inspection at import. For trade within the EU, specific disease control measures are applied at the place of production and plant passports may be issued that travel with consignments allowing their free movement between member states. From May 2002 measures to control the movement of plants susceptible to Phytophthora ramorum into and within the UK where introduced under the Plant Health (Phytophthora ramorum) (England) Order 2002. Following the agreement of community wide measures this Order was superseded in November 2002, by the Plant Health (Phytophthora ramorum) (England) (No. 2) Order 2002 (SI 2002 No. 2573). The latter applied specific disease control measures at the place of production to rhododendrons and viburnums, the two types of plant which have been most often found to be infected in Europe.

Findings of Phytophthora ramorum in imported and UK origin plants are of concern and inspections at UK nurseries and ports of entry are to be stepped up to ensure that all consignments of plants moved into and within the UK are free from Phytophthora ramorum and meet plant passport requirements. Any consignment found to be infected, or not to have the correct documentation, will, as now, be destroyed.

The regulations controlling imports of wood and wood products are set out in the Plant Health (Forestry) (Great Britain) Order 1993 (SI 1993/1283, as amended). These require that imports of wood of oak from North American countries are treated to protect against, in particular, another fungal organism Ceratocystis fagacearum, the cause of Oak wilt disease. The Forestry Commission concluded that these controls are effective against Phytophthora ramorum but that they needed to be extended to bring under regulation wood from other trees that are known to host this pathogen and which originate in the USA. The Forestry Commissioners therefore implemented emergency measures in June 2002 by way of the Plant Health (Phytophthora ramorum) (Great Britain) Order 2002 (SI 2002 No. 1478). This Order was superseded in November 2002, to implement the European Community measures against Phytophthora ramorum, by the Plant Health (Phytophthora ramorum) (Great Britain) (No. 2) Order 2002 (SI 2002 No. 2589).

The Forestry Commission enforces the controls on wood and wood products through its system of import inspections carried out at ports of entry.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* businesses, *(b)* landowners and *(c)* others have had all or some of their plant or tree stocks destroyed as a result of an outbreak of sudden oak death in the last two years. [151952]

Mr. Bradshaw: To categorise businesses, landowners and others would be misleading as there may be a cross over in some areas. For example a private landowner may also open their property to the public as a business. In the last two years, there have been 302 outbreak premises in England and Wales, 263 at nurseries and other retail outlets and 39 at established gardens, woods and other wild planting areas. All those on whom notices have been served have destroyed infected material. Others have done so voluntarily.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many claims, and of what total value, her Department has received for compensation for outbreaks of sudden oak death from *(a)* commercial nurseries, *(b)* landowners and *(c)* others in each of the last 24 months for which records are available; [151953];

(2) how many claims for compensation for sudden oak death have been settled; and what payments have been made during the last two years. [151954]

Mr. Bradshaw: Only one claim for compensation as been received in respect of destroyed stock following the finding of "Phytophthora ramorum" at a commercial nursery. We are unable to disclose precise details of this claim for legal reasons, but we can confirm this claim is still under consideration. Plant disease campaigns over many years have not incorporated compensation for the destruction of affected plants. Our position has been that the limited resources of the plant health service are better deployed in detecting and identifying outbreaks, and in carrying out research on risks and risk management measures. However, we have recently received an approach from industry organisations wishing to discuss possible risk-sharing mechanisms to avoid disproportionate losses to individual enterprises when action has to be taken against plant pests or diseases. We welcome this opportunity to explore the available options. The outcome of these ongoing discussions could have an effect on any individual claims we receive.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* staff and *(b)* resources of (i) the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate and (ii) other departmental bodies are deployed to detect and control outbreaks of sudden oak death in the UK. [151955]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra's 75 Plant Health and Seeds Inspectors are already employed for about 20 per cent. of their time on inspection and surveillance duties related to Phytophthora ramorum, known in the USA as sudden oak death. Therefore, although there is no specific budget allocation, this amounts to an expenditure of approximately £1.8 million in 2003–04.

In response to the growing number of findings of this pathogen in England and Wales, Defra is redeploying around 20 additional staff to assist the Inspectorate in undertaking extra inspections at production nurseries, wild areas and ports of entry. They will be supplemented by the recruitment of six additional full-time Inspectors for 2004–2005. This is part of a package of measures announced on 4 December.

Defra is also funding a substantial increase in sample diagnoses undertaken by the Central Science Laboratory (CSL), an executive agency of Defra, which is estimated to cost in excess of £750,000 to the end of 2004–2005. CSL is also involved in ongoing research into "Phytophthora ramorum" to the value of £370,000.

The Forestry Commission (FC) has redirected about 23 staff onto a woodland survey in England and Wales, to be completed by April 2004, which will help us to assess whether Phytophthora ramorum is present in the wider environment. FC will be contributing £50,000 to CSL to fund diagnostics in support of this survey. Resources have also been redirected within the Forest Research Agency (FRA) into projects designed to help us better understand the disease. From January 2004 FRA is responsible for the co-ordination of an EU funded research project on "P. ramorum".

In the devolved administrations the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) 5 Plant Health Inspectors already spend approximately 20–25 per cent. of their time on "Phytophthora ramorum" inspection and sampling duties. From January 2004 this team has been brought up to complement with a newly trained inspector. Although there is no specific budget dedicated to Phytophthora ramorum inspections, the total amount to an expenditure for 2003–04 is approximately £90,000.

Seven Forestry Officers have been trained and, from January 2004, are spending approximately 10 per cent. of their time on Phytopthora. ramorum inspection and sampling work, primarily on DARD Forestry Service and private woodland sites with a budget of approximately £65,000. In addition, a Principal Scientific Officer is spending approximately 25 per cent. of his time in analysing samples for "P. ramorum". The budget for this work is approximately £50,000.

For 2003–04 the number of Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department staff spending part of their time on detection and control of "Phytophthora ramorum" is seven, including one scientific officer. The total management plan resource employed in this work for 2003–04, to date, is £37,626.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent measures her Department has taken to ensure that plants and seeds infected with sudden oak death are not imported into the UK. [151956]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Plant Health (Great Britain) Order 1993 (SI 1993/1320, as amended) sets out the controls on the import, movement and keeping of plants within the EU. The Order requires all plants entering the UK from third countries to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate and are subject to inspection at import. For trade within the EU, specific disease control measures are applied at the place of production and plant passports may be issued that travel with consignments allowing their free movement between member states. From May 2002 measures to control the movement of plants susceptible to Phytophthora ramorum into and within the UK where introduced under the Plant Health "(Phytophthora ramorum)" (England) Order 2002. Following the agreement of community wide measures this Order was superseded in November 2002, by the Plant Health (Phytophthora ramorum) (England) (No. 2) Order 2002 (SI 2002 No. 2573). The latter applied specific disease control measures at the place of production to rhododendrons and viburnums, the two types of plant which have been most often found to be infected in Europe.

Findings of "Phytophthora ramorum" in imported and UK origin plants are of concern and inspections at UK nurseries and ports of entry are to be stepped up to ensure that all consignments of plants moved into and within the UK are free from Phytophthora ramorum and meet plant passport requirements. Any consignment found to be infected, or not to have the correct documentation, will, as now, be destroyed.

Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has received a copy of the joint report by Greenpeace and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, entitled The Net Effect. [150882]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has received a copy of the joint report "The Net Effect". I share Greenpeace and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society concern about the levels of cetacean bycatch in fisheries. Indeed we have carried out extensive research into this issue and produced a UK strategy for the reduction of small cetacean bycatch.

Meaningful action to address the bycatch problem requires action on the part of all EU Member States involved in the fisheries concerned, not just the UK. Discussions are currently taking place on European Commission proposals to protect dolphins and small cetaceans from injury or death in fishing gear.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Cote d'Ivoire

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to assist the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire; and if he will make a statement. [153350]

Mr. Mullin: The UK fully supports the Linas Marcoussis Agreement (LMA) as the basis for sustainable peace in Côte d'Ivoire. Our engagement has included £4 million to help fund regional peacekeepers

and £800,000 in humanitarian aid. We welcome the progress made in the peace process since December 2003. We continue to urge all parties to proceed quickly with full implementation of the LMA, including the programme of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. We are supporting the early deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation to Côte d'Ivoire to assist this.

Ethiopia

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made in the last 12 months of human rights in Ethiopia. [153343]

Mr. Mullin: We continue to have concerns about the human rights situation in Ethiopia. In the Memorandum of Understanding we signed with Ethiopia in January 2003, the Government of Ethiopia made a commitment to protect the full range of human rights including economic and social rights of all Ethiopians, especially the poor. We are assisting the implementation of this commitment through our support for Ethiopia's poverty reduction strategy and through regular dialogue with the Ethiopian Government, as well as carefully monitoring their performance.

EU Enlargement

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 148, if the Government will introduce a seven-year transition period for the free movement of workers from countries joining the EU on 1 May 2004. [152968]

Mr. MacShane: The Government's policy on free movement of workers after accession of the new member states on 1 May 2004 remains as set out in my answer of 27 January 2004.

The Government will be monitoring the effect of the free movement of workers on the UK labour market and in the unexpected event of a large influx of workers to the UK, which threatens the level of employment or standard of living in a particular region or occupation, it would re-impose restrictions on workers.

Iran

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on the number of *(a)* injuries and *(b)* deaths which occurred among the population of Shahr-e Babak in the southern province of Kerman in Iran in January as a result of police and military action; and if he will make a statement. [152924]

Mr. Rammell: Iran's official media have reported that four people were killed and 40 were injured on 24 January in clashes between law enforcement forces and striking workers at a copper factory in Shahr-e Babak. President Khatemi is reported to have ordered an investigation.

We are following the situation closely.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Sir Jeremy Greenstock will attend the planned meeting between the Iraqi Government Council and United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, on 19 January 2004. [149607]

Mr. Rammell: I apologise to my hon. Friend for the late response. Sir Jeremy Greenstock did attend.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to support the highest possible level of Kurdish independence and self-determination within a federal administration for Iraq. [153118]

Mr. Rammell: The Government are committed to maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq. The Government have no preferred model of federalism in Iraq. These are issues that the Iraqis need to decide among themselves during the constitutional convention scheduled for 2005.

Publicity Campaigns

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on *(a)* advertising and publicity and *(b)* information campaigns in 2001–02. [152980]

Mr. Mullin: To provide a breakdown on spend for advertising and publicity, and information campaigns in the form requested would incur disproportionate costs. However, the total spend on all three activities in 2001–02 was £2,558,570. The major part of these costs was for generic publications, which were made available to all Foreign and Commonwealth Office Departments and overseas posts.

In addition, the spend on recruitment advertising for 2001–02 was £2,791,659.

Somaliland

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to encourage the EU to recognise the Republic of Somaliland. [153449]

Mr. Mullin: We have no immediate plans to encourage the EU to recognise an independent Somaliland.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to encourage the United Nations to assist in settling the disagreement between the state of Somaliland and the territory of Puntland concerning Las Anod. [153450]

Mr. Mullin: I share the hon. Member's concern about recent hostilities between Somaliland and Puntland and registered my anxieties with Somaliland foreign affairs spokesperson Edna Adan when I met her in Addis Ababa on 19 January. I understand that the two sides have drawn back and the traditional leaders and elders in the area are working hard to find a peaceful settlement. We see no need for UN intervention.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to provide assistance for parliamentary elections in the Republic of Somaliland. [153471]

Mr. Mullin: Yes. We stand ready to provide support to the parliamentary elections in Somaliland. We hope these will take place soon and make this point regularly to the Somaliland authorities.

Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the *(a)* Chinese Foreign Minister and *(b)* Chinese ambassador to the Court of St. James's in connection with the imprisonment of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche. [153294]

Mr. Rammell: I raised the case with Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui in Beijing on 17 December 2003. He replied that Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche had had a fair and public trial and been sentenced in accordance with Chinese law.

The latest EU demarche took place in Beijing on 4 February. In response, Mr. Wang Min, Deputy Director General of the Department of International Organisations and Conferences at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche was in good health and being held in Tuandong prison, Sichuan province.

We have raised Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche's case with the Chinese authorities on a number of occasions, including in our bilateral human rights dialogue and through the EU. We have raised concerns about both his welfare and his medical treatment on other occasions.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Acquired Brain Injury

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have to provide central funding for community-based training and rehabilitation for people with acquired brain injury in Northern Ireland after the Department of Employment and Learning ceases to provide further funding for the ReConnect training facility; and what alternative plans he has for funding this service. [152417]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety are currently considering the implications of the failure of ReConnect to win ESF funding for its work. As part of this process of consideration they will explore how best the training and rehabilitation needs of this client group can be met, in the longer term.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Government Department is responsible for the provision of community-based training and rehabilitation of those with acquired brain injury in Northern Ireland. [152419]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Employment and Learning is responsible for the provision of support for individuals with acquired brain injury to help them re-enter the labour market. This includes the provision of appropriate vocational training.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is responsible for the provision of rehabilitation for people with a brain injury where this is required to meet assessed clinical or social need. This includes intensive in-patient rehabilitation and community-based social rehabilitation covering such areas as social and daily living skills.

Draft European Constitution

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Minister for Europe on the Draft Constitution for the European Union and its impact on Northern Ireland. [152582]

Mr. Pearson: I am a member of the Joint Ministerial Committee on the European Union, which is chaired by the Foreign Secretary and of which the Minister for Europe is also a member. The Draft Constitutional Treaty on the European Union has been discussed at previous meetings of the Committee.

Northern Ireland's position on European issues will continue to be represented through the appropriate channels at both official and ministerial levels.

Flood Defences

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what projects *(a)* have been completed, *(b)* are under way and *(c)* are planned to deal with flooding in North Belfast; and what the costs are of each project. [152584]

Mr. Spellar: I have asked the Chief Executive of Water Service to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

Kinnego Park

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library a map of the land in the vicinity of Kinnego Park in Derry that is in the possession of the Road Service. [151587]

Mr. Spellar: I have arranged for the relevant map to be placed in the Library.

Learning Difficulties

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what input the working group chaired by the Department of Education to consider future provision for young people with moderate learning difficulties has made to *(a)* the Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability Services commissioned and led by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, *(b)* the Children's Strategy Review led by the Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers and *(c)* the consultation exercise on Youth Services led by the Department of Education. [152143]

Jane Kennedy: The Department of Education does not chair a group to consider future provision for the needs of young people specifically with moderate learning difficulties. It does, however, chair an Inter Departmental Working Group (IDG) that is looking at the transition of young people with statements of special educational needs to adult life.

(a) The Chair of the IDG is a member of the Promoting Social Inclusion sub-group of the Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability Steering Group. The Education and Training Inspectorate is represented on both the Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability Steering Group and the Children and Young People Task Group, as well as the IDG.

(b) The IDG has made no direct input to the development of the Strategy for Children and Young People. However, the Department is represented on the interdepartmental group which is overseeing the development of the strategy and through this forum will ensure that the strategy takes account of the various initiatives in which the Department is involved.

(c) It is not clear to which consultation exercise the question refers. Issues which have indications for the Youth Service will be drawn to the attention of the relevant authorities.

Management Consultants

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148029]

Mr. Pearson: The total expenditure on use of management consultants[1] for my Department (including the Northern Ireland Office, but excluding agencies and non-departmental public bodies) in each of the last five years was as follows:

[1] Defined as consultancy work relating to policy appraisal and review, strategic management, organisational development and performance management.

	(£)
1999–00	[1]1,193,814
2000–01	2,541,618
2001–02	3,104,216
2002–03	2,642,657
2003–04	1,639,617

[1] Following devolution five new NI Departments came into existence in December 1999 (the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Department of Employment and Learning, Department for Regional Development, Department for Social Development and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister). The first four months were largely taken up with the development of structures and strategies. Expenditure on consultancy was, therefore, relatively small.

North-South Implementation Bodies

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the current staffing figures for each of the North-South implementation bodies. [152591]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Details of the staff employed in the North/South Implementation Bodies as at 5 November 2003 are provided in the table below:

Number (wte) employed in North/South Implementation Bodies at 5 November 2003

Body	*Permanent*	*Secondees*	*Temporary*	*Placements*	*Total*
The Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission	35	1	2	2	40
Waterways Ireland	314.12	1	11	—	326.12
The Trade and Business Development Body	38.6	1	—	2	41.6
The Special EU Programmes Body	36	2	6	-	44
The North/South Language Body	40.1	3	1.4	1	45.5
The Food Safety Promotion Board	19	—	9	1	29
Grand total	482.82	8	29.4	6	526.22

Paramilitary Activities

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many paramilitary shootings there were in 2003, broken down by paramilitary group. [152354]

Jane Kennedy: It is not possible to provide the information in the level of detail requested. However, I can advise that during 2003 there were 154 paramilitary style shootings: 99 attributed to loyalists and 55 to republicans.

Note:
2003 statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* full-time reservists are attached to each district command unit; and if he will make a statement. [152526]

Jane Kennedy: The figures requested as at 30 January 2004 are shown in the table.

(FTE)

DCU	*Regular*	*Reserve CON*
Antrim DCU	138.75	46
Ards DCU	150.75	48
Armagh DCU	129.5	52
Banbridge DCU	91.5	24.75
Belfast East DCU	216	114
Belfast North DCU	356.5	73
Belfast South DCU	350.75	105
Belfast West DCU	247	144
Ballymena DCU	138	19
Ballymoney DCU	65	12
Carrickfergus DCU	79	41
Coleraine	134	32
Cookstown	91	24
Craigavon DCU	193.75	43
Castlereagh DCU	126.5	56
Dungannon and South Tyrone	142.75	45
Down DCU	157.5	54
Fermanagh DCU	183	55

(FTE)

DCU	Regular	Reserve CON
Foyle DCU	248	63
Larne DCU	82	16
Limavady DCU	83	22
Lisburn DCU	233.25	79
Magherafelt DCU	94	45
Moyle DCU	27	10
Newtownabbey DCU	156	24
North Down DCU	156.75	65
Newry and Mourne DCU	196.75	59
Omagh DCU	125	32
Strabane DCU	111	44
Totals	4,504	1,446.75

The table represents those officers specifically attached to District Command Units. A further 2,654 regular and 173 full-time reserve officers are attached to headquarters and regions, many of whom (such as those within Tactical Support Groups, Regional Crime Squads and Road Traffic Policing) are also deployed to assist officers in individual District Command Units as necessary.

Note:

It should be noted that where officers are listed as, for example, .75 or .25 this equates to hours worked of full-time staff who have elected to work part-time.

Public Order

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been charged with an offence arising out of disturbances in North Belfast on 12 July 2003. [152395]

Jane Kennedy: No persons have been charged with public order offences in North Belfast on 12 July 2003.

Racism

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will attend the Anti-Racist Network rally in Belfast City Hall on 27 January; and whether his Department is providing financial assistance for the rally. [151137]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I was unable to attend the rally in Belfast due to commitments in Westminster. I understand that an official from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister's Race Equality Unit attended.

Sinn Fein

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the recent comments by the Justice Minister of the Republic of Ireland that Sinn Fein benefits from criminal activity. [152359]

Jane Kennedy: I am aware of the recent comments by the Irish Government, and we maintain close contact with them. Investigation of specific allegations of criminal activity is a matter for the Chief Constable. More generally, PIRA and other paramilitary involvement in criminal activity is well documented, as is the range of action being taken against it.

Speed Limits

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the tolerance levels permitted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland are for motorists exceeding the speed limit and who have been detected using *(a)* fixed cameras, *(b)* mobile cameras and *(c)* other detection devices; and how long these tolerance levels have been in force. [152847]

Jane Kennedy: The Northern Ireland Safety Camera Scheme was launched on 1 July 2003, comprising four fixed sites and over 70 mobile enforcement sites. To date a total of 10,321 motorists have been detected through the scheme.

The PSNI do not think that it would be appropriate to disclose the threshold they operate to in respect of speeding offences as this may lead motorists to make an assumption that it is safe to travel at this speed without fear of detection, thus contributing to an increase in the overall average speed of vehicles on our roads.

The purpose of a threshold is to allow for inaccuracies in the target vehicle's speedometer and to provide a consistency in police enforcement. The threshold does not vary according to the type of enforcement being conducted, however should there be extenuating circumstances, for example, children entering and leaving school, the threshold may be lowered in order to deal with offending motorists.

The thresholds have been in place since October 2001.

St. Cecilia's College

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what assessment has been made of the *(a)* size and *(b)* physical condition of the buildings at St. Cecilia's College, Derry, for the purposes of delivering the Northern Ireland curriculum; and what the time scale is for replacement of the school buildings; [151573]

(2) what assessment he has made of whether the *(a)* size and *(b)* physical condition of the buildings of St. Cecilia's College, Derry, are sufficient for the purposes of delivering the Northern Ireland Curriculum; and what his Department's plans are for the timing of replacement school buildings. [149654]

Jane Kennedy: St. Cecilia's College suffers from a number of serious deficiencies in the level of permanent accommodation. A major capital works scheme to address these deficiencies was announced in March 2001 and a project board has been established to take forward the scheme through a public private partnership arrangement. It is anticipated that, subject to securing a successful outcome from current discussions on the site issues affecting the school, it should be possible for the scheme for a new school to progress shortly to public advertisement. I would hope that the scheme could be completed within about 2½ years following the advertisement.

Surgery (Gall Stones and Kidney Stones)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland

have required surgery for the treatment of *(a)* gall stones and *(b)* kidney stones, in each of the past five years. [152922]

Angela Smith: The information is as follows:

(a) The following table shows the total number of patients in Northern Ireland who had surgery for gall stones in each of the last five financial years.

	NI total
1998–99	1,781
1999–2000	1,798
2000–01	1,829
2001–02	1,834
2002–03	2,119

(b) The following table shows the total number of patients in Northern Ireland who had surgery for kidney stones in each of the last five financial years.

	NI total
1998–99	191
1999–2000	216
2000–01	213
2001–02	199
2002–03	360

Source:
Hospital Inpatients System.

Teacher Vacancies

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many teacher vacancies there were in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997; and what steps he is taking to reduce such figures. [151321]

Jane Kennedy: Information on teaching vacancies is not held by the Department of Education nor collated by the relevant employing authorities as figures change very frequently due to workforce mobility. However, a survey into possible teacher shortages in the post-primary sector, carried out by researchers from Stranmillis University College in June 2003, indicated 86 vacancies out of a total teaching force of over 10,000 in that sector.

TREASURY

Immigration

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to change his estimate of immigration in the *(a)* short, *(b)* medium and *(c)* long terms to take account of likely numbers of immigrants from Eastern European countries which will accede to the EU this year. [153094]

Ruth Kelly: The latest (2002-based) official population projections for the United Kingdom were published by the Government Actuary's Department in December 2003. At present, the precise impact of enlargement of the European Union cannot be predicted. However, recent Home Office research has concluded that the effect on the UK is likely to be fairly small.

National population projections are normally carried out biennially and the next set is scheduled for publication in 2005. As usual, there will be a full review of migration assumptions for these projections. The need for an additional allowance for the effects of EU enlargement will be reviewed at the time.

Community Amateur Sports Clubs

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many community amateur sports clubs he estimates will benefit from 80 per cent. mandatory rate relief in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [153123]

John Healey: It is estimated that between 30,000 and 40,000 clubs in the UK might be eligible to apply for registration as a community amateur sports club (CASC). Details of clubs by town or county are not held centrally.

All eligible clubs in England and Wales will be able to receive mandatory rates relief of 80 per cent. from April 2004. Local authorities can increase this relief to 100 per cent. at their own discretion.

Economic Inactivity

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were economically inactive and what the economic inactivity rate was for each quarter since Quarter 1 1997, broken down by *(a)* qualification level, *(b)* income bracket, *(c)* former profession where applicable, *(d)* age group and *(e)* sex, in each (i) constituency and (ii) region. [152932]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. George Osborne, dated 9 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about economic inactivity. (152932)

I regret that this information could only be provided in full at disproportionate cost. However, some of the higher-level information requested is published on the ONS website, or on the Nomis(database, both of which are available via the House of Commons Library.

Information about economic inactivity levels by age and sex in each region is published in Table 10 of the Labour Market Statistics Regional First Releases, which can be accessed from the following page on the ONS website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/press_release/Archive.asp. These estimates, from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), are subject to revisions. LFS estimates published in the Regional First Releases prior to 13 November 2003 are not directly comparable with current data. As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

ONS does not publish estimates of economic inactivity rates by age and sex for each region. However, these can be calculated by subtracting the economic activity rate (published in Table 9 of the Regional First Releases) from 100 per cent.

For Parliamentary Constituency areas, ONS produces information about economic inactivity rates, but not levels, by age and sex. This information is available on a yearly basis and can be obtained from the Nomis(database.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* benefits and *(b)* tax credits are available to people who are economically inactive. [152933]

Dawn Primarolo: Incapacity Benefit, Carer's Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance, Income Support and Housing and Council Tax Benefit are the principal benefits available to working age people who are economically inactive. From this year all families with children and with annual pre-tax incomes of £58,000 or less are eligible for the Child Tax Credit.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was of *(a)* benefits and *(b)* tax credits paid to people who were economically inactive in each year since 1997. [152934]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on expenditure on benefits which are primarily paid to economically inactive people of working age is published in the Benefit Expenditure Tables on the Department of Work and Pensions' Website at www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp. The Working Families' and Disabled Person's Tax Credits were only paid to households with one or more working adults. From this year all families with children and with annual pre-tax incomes of £58,000 or less are eligible for the Child Tax Credit.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of *(a)* educational attainment, *(b)* skills gaps and *(c)* language barriers as causes of economic inactivity. [152937]

Ruth Kelly: The Government have published an analysis of the extent and causes of inactivity and unemployment, and of the policies in place to address them, in "Full employment in every region" (HM Treasury/Department for Work and Pensions, December 2003), a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

The Government's strategy to raise skill levels in the UK is set out in the White Paper "21st Century Skills—Realising our Potential" in July 2003 (Cm 5810).

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a summary of responses received to the consultation paper Economic instruments to improve household energy efficiency: consultation document on specific measures. [153763]

John Healey: The consultation was launched on 1 August 2003, and closed on 24 October. The Government received 126 responses, a summary of which was published on the Treasury's website on 11 December 2003, and a copy is available in the Library of the House.

Euro

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect upon forecast euro area gross domestic product growth of the strength of the euro on the euro area trade route; and what assessment he has made of the implications of this effect for the UK economy. [153587]

Ruth Kelly: The Government will update their forecasts for the UK economy and the euro area in the Budget on 17 March, taking into account all relevant factors.

Family Expenditure Survey

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the definition of income in the family expenditure survey includes capital gains. [153616]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 9 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking whether the definition of income in the Family Expenditure Survey includes capital gains. (153616)

The definition of income used in the Family Expenditure Survey, and its successor from 2001–02, the Expenditure and Food Survey, does not include capital gains. This is in accordance with international guidelines. Further detail is available on the National Statistics website at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_social/Family_Spending_2001_02_revised/Family_Spending_revised.pdf

International Finance Facility

Ms Drown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what contribution the UK will make to the International Finance Facility to 2015; and what proportion of projected GDP this represents. [152921]

John Healey: Final decisions on contributions to the proposed International Finance Facility can only be taken in conjunction with donor partners.

For our part, the UK Government stands ready to commit the additional resources pledged at the 2002 Monterrey Conference, where all EU states agreed to reach 0.39 per cent. ODA/GNI from 2006. The most recent Spending Review announced that UK ODA would reach £4.9 billion from 2005–06, or 0.4 per cent. ODA/GNI, thereby exceeding our Monterrey commitment. This represents a 93 per cent. increase in UK official development assistance since 1997.

MOD Expenditure

Mr. Soames: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those categories of expenditure within which the Ministry of Defence may normally incur commitments within existing budgetary limits without the need to refer to his Department. [153516]

Mr. Boateng: A list of categories within HM Treasury's financial delegation to MOD has been placed in the Library of the House.

National Savings Bank Accounts

Mr. Gale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions took place between the Treasury, the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters and non-governmental organisations representing the elderly prior to the decision to withdraw the National Savings Bank Blue Ordinary Account; and if he will make a statement. [153474]

Ruth Kelly: National Savings and Investments' primary role is to raise cost-effective financing for the Government and it can only achieve this by offering savings and investment products which are attractive to customers and which they want to buy.

The Ordinary Account, set up in 1861, has changed little since it was introduced. Due to extensive changes in the savings market, the Ordinary Account no longer reflects customers' savings needs. In light of this, and following research with a wide range of customers, National Savings and Investments decided, with the Treasury's approval, to close the Ordinary Account and open a new and more appealing product—the Easy Access Savings Account. The features of this new product are aimed at offering customers greater flexibility in managing their savings.

The Post Office remains a key channel for National Savings and Investments and the new Easy Access Savings Account has been specifically developed with them to take advantage of their new network banking capability.

Although neither the Treasury nor National Savings and Investments had direct discussions with the National Federation of Sub Postmasters, the Post Office engaged in direct discussions with the Federation on how to introduce the new account and close the Ordinary Account.

In December, as the first public announcement of the planned changes was made, special interest groups, including those with a special interest in the elderly, were informed by the Post Office and National Savings and Investments. National Savings and Investments also offered to discuss their plans directly with these groups as well as with the Federation.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what provision will be made to enable National Savings Bank Blue Ordinary Account holders without bank accounts to transfer funds to a National Savings Bank Easy Access Account; [153475]

(2) whether post office card accounts are acceptable in lieu of bank accounts for the purpose of transferring from National Savings Bank Blue Ordinary accounts to National Savings Bank Easy Access accounts. [153476]

Ruth Kelly: In common with many other providers, National Savings and Investments' new Easy Access Savings Account requires a customer to have a bank or building society account to receive repayments. The Easy Access Savings Account will therefore not be suitable for those without such an account. However, National Savings and Investments offer other products, including the Investment Account, which can be operated without the need for a bank account. The Post Office card account is limited to receiving pension or benefit payments only and no other credits so would not be suitable as an alternative to use with an Easy Access Savings Account.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what facilities will be made available to give persons holding National Savings Bank blue ordinary accounts who do not have a bank account access to their funds after 31 July. [153451]

Ruth Kelly: After 31 July 2004, if a customer wishes to make a withdrawal from their Ordinary Account—which must be to close the account—the arrangements will remain as they currently stand. A customer who does not have a bank account can request an uncrossed warrant that can be encashed at a chosen Post Office branch.

Penrose Report

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the reasons are for the delay in the publication of the Penrose Report on Equitable Life. [153796]

Ruth Kelly: As set out in my written statement of 5 January 2004, the Treasury intends to publish the report in full as soon as possible. There will be an announcement about publication in due course.

Provision for Defence Capability

Mr. Soames: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the net cash requirement for Request for Resources 1: Provision for Defence Capability is for financial years 2001–02 to 2002–03; and what the planned net cash requirement is for financial years 2003–04 to 2005–06. [153023]

Mr. Boateng: For 2001–02 and 2002–03, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the Ministry of Defence's Report and Accounts 2002–03 (published in October 2003) and for the current year to the Winter Supplementary Estimate for 2003–04 (published in November 2003). Net Cash Requirement figures for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are not held.

R and D Tax Credit

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the small businesses that have applied for the research and development tax credit have had their applications accepted in each year since 2000. [152527]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of claims from small companies received in each year since 2000 is given in my answer to a question from the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1045W. The figures provided represent the number of Corporation Tax Self Assessment returns where companies have claimed research and development tax credits.

Spirit Duty (Evasion)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful prosecutions there were for evading duty on spirits in 2001–02. [152946]

John Healey: In 2001–02 there were nine prosecutions for evading duty on spirits, of these seven were successful and two were unsuccessful.

Additionally 99 prosecutions were brought for cases involving the evasion of duty on mixed excise goods, some of which may have included spirits.

Figures for the current and future years will be reported by HM Customs and Excise in their Annual Report.

Theatre Tax Receipts

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate total tax receipts accruing to the Exchequer from the theatre sector through *(a)* the taxation of theatre companies' profits and *(b)* VAT on the sale of theatre tickets. [153231]

John Healey: Corporation Tax data do not identify receipts from the theatre sector separately from other Recreational Services.

The VAT due on the sale of theatre tickets is estimated at around £45 million. This estimate does not take account of any input VAT reclaimed by businesses on the purchase of theatre tickets.

Tripartite Committee on Financial Stability

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to whom the minutes of the Tripartite Committee on Financial Stability are distributed; and when and under what circumstances they can be made available to hon. Members. [153726]

Ruth Kelly: The minutes of the Tripartite Committee are distributed to the Chancellor, the Financial Secretary and other officials at the Treasury, Bank of England and the Financial Services Authority. The minutes must remain confidential because of constraints under EC and UK law, because publication could discourage private sector practitioners and foreign financial authorities from supplying information on an informal basis and because the material is often market sensitive.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the agenda items covered by the monthly meetings of the Tripartite Committee on Financial Stability in the last six months. [153727]

Ruth Kelly: The agendas of Tripartite Standing Committee meetings must remain confidential because even the disclosure that a certain issue has been discussed could be market sensitive, or in some circumstances, exacerbate problems which the Committee is seeking to address.

The range of subjects that the Committee has discussed was described in a note by HM Treasury to the Treasury Committee in January 2003.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he will reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. W. Stewart. [151235]

Mr. Lammy: I apologise to my right hon. Friend for the delay in replying to his letter of 15 December last. The position in relation to Mr. Stewart's dealing with the Legal Services Commission is that the Commission wrote to his solicitors on 22 January, requesting that they submit their bill of costs within 28 days. I hope to be in a position to report to him further during the week 23 February.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what type of secure communications systems are available to British troops in Afghanistan; [153054]

(2) what *(a)* type and *(b)* quantity of secure communications British (i) foot and (ii) mobile patrols have in Afghanistan. [153050]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* The United Kingdom's forces deployed in Afghanistan are equipped with a range of static and mobile secure communications systems. Static systems operating through satellite ground stations link both the United Kingdom's contingent serving in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and the provincial reconstruction team (PRT), into the Ministry of Defence's wider secure communications network. The ISAF contingent also uses an encrypted very high frequency radio system for both vehicle and foot patrols while the PRT relies on tactical satellite communications systems. I am withholding further details of these systems and the numbers in accordance with exemption 1 of the code of practice on access to Government information.

Aircraft Carrier

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on current projections of cost and capability for the new aircraft carrier programme. [149775]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Aircraft Carrier (CVF) programme is currently in its Assessment Phase. Decisions on the programme beyond that stage, including the capability which CVF will deliver, will be taken at the Main Gate investment point.

Our current estimate for the cost of the Demonstration and Manufacture contract is around £3 billion. These cost estimates will be further refined during the remainder of the Assessment Phase.

Ammunition

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many contracts for the production of ammunition have been awarded to foreign companies in circumstances where a British company has bid for the contract in the last five years; and who the *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful companies were in each case. [152007]

Mr. Ingram: Over the past five years some 44 contracts for ammunition have been placed with foreign companies. However, we are unable to verify whether British companies bid for these contracts as the information on unsuccessful bidders is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The successful contractors by country were as follows:

Belgium
FN Herstal
Germany
Dynamit Nobel GmbH
Silberhutte
Raug Munitions
Nico Pyro
MEN
Shamban Aerospace Sealing
Israel
Israel Military Industries
Italy
Simmel
Netherlands
Erometaal
Norway
Nammo Raufoss
South Africa
Swartklip
Milkor (PT Y) Ltd.
Sweden
Nammo Vanasverken
Bofors
USA
General Dynamics

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which foreign contractors after winning an ammunition contract have refused to supply the goods in the last five years; and what the reasons given for doing so were in each case. [152008]

Mr. Ingram: There have been no known cases in the last five years of foreign contractors refusing to supply ammunition which they were contracted to do so.

Armed Forces Accommodation (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the standard of armed forces accommodation in Wales. [151740]

Mr. Caplin: Separate figures for Wales are not readily identifiable and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, within the Western Region, of which Wales is a part, there are 3,683 core family properties of which 2,446 are in the top category for quality. Single Living Accommodation, which provides some 3,800 bed-spaces in Wales and 1,462 are in the top two quality categories.

Arms Purchases

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government have used a contractor to purchase weapons from abroad for supply to another foreign user; and if he will make a statement. [146688]

Mr. Ingram: No form of arrangements have been made with a contractor to purchase weapons from abroad for supply to a foreign user outside of the governing UK export control system.

Artillery Weapons

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on deciding which weapons would best meet the Army's future Lightweight Mobile Artillery Weapons System Gun requirement. [152006]

Mr. Ingram: The Lightweight Mobile Artillery Weapons System Gun programme is currently in its Assessment Phase. A decision on the best solution for this requirement is not expected before 2006.

Cluster Munitions

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date his Department was informed of the purchase in early 2003 by BAE Systems UK from Israel Military Industries of 26,000 155 mm L20 cluster artillery shells; whether the order was made at the behest of his Department; what his Department's response was in respect of this proposed purchase; on what date a Minister was first notified of this proposed purchase and what his response was; on what date his Department purchased these cluster shells from BAE Systems and at what cost; for what reason his Department purchased these cluster shells from BAE Systems rather than from Israeli Military Systems directly; and if he will make a statement. [146471]

Mr. Ingram: A contract was let with BAE Systems on 7 November 2002 by the Defence General Munitions Integrated Project Team (DGM IPT). Deliveries from that contract were made in March, May, June and July 2003. I am withholding details of the cost of these munitions in accordance with Exemption 7 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information as it is classified Commercial in Confidence. It is normal practice under the Framework Partnering Agreement with the Royal Ordnance Defence division of BAE Systems for the DGM IPT to use the company as a Prime Contractor whenever it is cost effective and adds value to do so. In this case, these requirements were met since BAE Systems were able to negotiate favourable rates for the shell.

Colchester Garrison

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many companies are in negotiations with the Ministry of Defence over the Colchester Garrison Private Finance Initiative agreement; [153518]

(2) how long negotiations for the Colchester Garrison Private Finance Initiative agreement have been taking place. [153517]

Mr. Caplin: As I announced on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 30WS, the Ministry of Defence has reached agreement with RMPA Services plc to redevelop and operate Colchester Garrison under a Private Finance Initiative. RMPA Services plc are a consortium, comprising Sir Robert McAlpine, W. S. Atkins plc, Sodexho and HSBC Infrastructure. Negotiations with the consortium commenced in October 1999 when they were appointed preferred bidder.

Departmental Land

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total expenditure on the maintenance of land owned by his Department within the UK was in 2002–03. [142286]

Mr. Caplin: The total expenditure on the Defence Estate in financial year 2002–03 for works services, accommodation stores, redevelopment, building maintenance, major housing works and some project expenditure on both land and buildings was £1.5 billion.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 274W, on departmental land, what the cost of maintaining land owned by his Department was in each of the last five years; and what the value is of the land. [148965]

Mr. Caplin: The following figures include costs for each of the last four full financial years for works services, accommodation stores, redevelopment, building maintenance, major housing works and some project expenditure on both land and buildings. There is no published information for 1998–99.

Financial year	*£ billion*
1999–2000	1.1
2000–01	1.2
2001–02	1.2
2002–03	1.5

The value of land owned by the Ministry of Defence is available on the Fixed Assets Register which can be accessed at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/mediastore/otherfiles/217.pdf

Disposal Contractors

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what provision the Department has made for exceptional legal costs associated with litigation with disposal contractors; [151582]

(2) how many sets of barristers' chambers have been employed by the Disposal Services Agency for litigation against disposal contractors since 1997, broken down by litigation action; [151589]

(3) what the *(a)* external legal and *(b)* total costs were of settling each claim by the Disposal Services Agency against disposal contractors in each year since 1997, broken down by contractor; [151590]

(4) how the accounts of the Disposal Services Agency indicated costs incurred for legal action involving disposal contractors in each year since 1997; [151591]

(5) which disposal contractors are in litigation with the Disposal Services Agency; and how many other disputes may result in litigation, broken down by contractor; [151592]

(6) how many disposal contractors the Disposal Services Agency has been in litigation with on contractual matters in each quarter since 1997, broken down by contractor; and how many have been settled by each year end; [151593]

(7) which disposal contractors have dealt with the Disposal Services Agency since 1997; [151594]

(8) what the legal costs of defending each action by disposal contractors against the Disposal Services Agency were in each of the last five years; [152145]

(9) if he will list the cases against the Disposal Services Agency which were settled *(a)* in court and *(b)* by arbitration in each of the last five years. [152146]

Mr. Ingram: A list of all the companies that have held disposal contracts with the Disposal Services Agency (DSA) for the collection, storage and marketing of surplus MOD stock since 1997 is set out as follows:

DSA Marketing and Sales Agreements

SRL No.	*Contractor*	*Commodity*
Current Contractors		
1	Azcom	Office and Domestic Furniture
2	Babcock	Commercial Vessels
3	Babcock	Misc Items (RMA)
4	BAE Systems	Stingray MODO and Tigerfish
5	Cronifer	Sale of Stock and Reusable Metals
6	Donelan	Office and Domestic Furniture
7	Ecosse Hospital Products Ltd.	Hospital Products
8	Field Textiles	Clothing and Textiles
9	JCM	Sale of surpluses from private sector and Gazelle Helicopters
10	Leyland Trucks Ltd.	Sale of Leyland 4 tonne trucks to Kenya
11	Liquidity Services Intl	Surplus Ship, Aircraft and A Veh. Spares
12	MBDA UK Ltd.	Rapier Eqpt and Spares
13	Office Green	Toner and Ink Jet Cartridges and Mobile Phones
14	PAL Carriers Ltd.	Office and Domestic Furniture
15	Penman Eng Ltd.	APV 1.5 Vehicles
16	Ramco	Misc. Items and Catering Eqpt. (RMA)
17	Recommit	Computers Associated Eqpt.
18	RO PLC/BAE	Army Ammunition
19	Sigma Aerospace	ALISON T-56 AERO ENGINES
20	Silver Lining	Surplus Computers Associated Eqpt.

DSA Marketing and Sales Agreements

SRL No.	*Contractor*	*Commodity*
21	Thales Air Defence	Javelin "Starburst" S1 5
22	Thorn Microwave Devices	RADAR (ESFKS)
23	Trackteck Industries	Cymbeline (mortar location radar)
24	Victory Ltd.	Wood and Copper HMS Victory
25	Withams	Motor Vehicles (Non Armoured)
Former Contractors		
26	AMAC (UK) Ltd.	Clothing and Textiles
27	Blue Chip International Disposals	Misc. Items (RMA)
28	British Car Auctions	Motor Vehicles
29	Compaq Ltd.	Computers Associated Eqpt
30	EKO-TEK Power Ltd.	Misc Items (RMA)
31	Digital Ltd.	Computers Associated Eqpt.
32	Fourth Party Services Ltd.	Computers Associated Eqpt.
33	Sartek (UK) Ltd.	Computers Associated Eqpt.
34	Hall and Watts	105mm Pack Howitzer
35	LC Trading	Office and Domestic Furniture
36	Leafields Logistics and Tech. Services Ltd.	Ship Spares
37	Leafields Logistics and Tech. Services Ltd.	Misc. Items (RMA)
38	MASL	Aircraft Spares
39	MGS (UK) Ltd.	Misc Items (RMA)—Region 5 and 7
40	Military Vehicle Spares Ltd.	Motor Vehicle Spares
41	RO Defence PLC	Light Guns

All of the DSA's contracts with these marketing contractors contain clauses within them that allow for the resolution of disputes. If, through normal dialogue between the parties, a dispute cannot be resolved, either party has the right to seek resolution of the dispute through litigation or arbitration. The arbitration process is in confidence.

Since 1997, there has only been one case of arbitration and this is still ongoing. However, because the information refers to legal proceedings, I am withholding the details in accordance with Exemption 4c of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. There have been no court proceedings.

If a dispute escalates into formal arbitration, legal costs may be incurred by the Department (depending upon the nature of the claim). These costs, however, may be recoverable depending on the outcome of the arbitration process.

Fighter Jets

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether Harrier GR7/9 aircraft will be able to operate from CVF prior to the entry into the service of the joint strike fighter; [152242]

(2) when he expects the joint strike fighter to enter into service. [152243]

Mr. Ingram: It would in theory be possible to operate Harrier GR9 from CVF but we have no requirement to do so. Current planning assumptions are that the primary aircraft operating from CVF will be the short take off vertical landing (STOVL) variant of the joint strike fighter which has been selected as the future joint combat aircraft (FJCA). Both CVF and FJCA are currently planned to come into service in 2012.

Foreign Ships

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 746W, on foreign ships, what plans he has to change the process by which his Department charters foreign ships; how many foreign vessels were rejected for charter last year because they failed to meet the standards set by his Department; and what plans he has to increase the proportion of British ships flying the Red Ensign used by his Department. [153932]

Mr. Ingram: The process for chartering freight-carrying commercial ships is reviewed on a regular basis and was last reviewed during 2003, following the Iraq campaign, when a more robust risk-based assessment was incorporated. Specialist ships are chartered to deliver specific technical capability, primarily outside the United Kingdom and often with limited global availability.

As I said in my previous reply, information on why ships fail consideration of charter is not held centrally. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The selection of ships for charter is dependent on a whole range of factors, of which flagging is but one. The Ministry of Defence charters ships in accordance with the European Union guidelines and to give bias to ships flying the Red Ensign would, therefore, run counter to such arrangements.

Future Aircraft Carriers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his latest estimate is of the maximum number of aircraft which will be capable of deployment on each future aircraft carrier. [146511]

Mr. Ingram: The CVF programme is currently in its Assessment Phase. This stage of work is intended to balance the key parameters of performance, time and cost in order to best meet our developing capability requirements, both in terms of the ships themselves and in the aircraft they will operate. The precise number of aircraft capable of being deployed on each CVF is still being finalised and will continue to evolve as the programme progresses.

HMS Bridport

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what repair work needed to be done to HMS Bridport in the 12 months before she was withdrawn from service; [150866]

(2) what his assessment is of the cost of bringing HMS Bridport into operational service. [150867]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North Essex (Mr. Jenkin) on 20 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 72W. During the 12 months before HMS Bridport was placed in extended readiness, no specific repair work needed to be done other than the routine maintenance and periodic safety related tasks which are necessary to enable RN ships to fulfil Fleet tasking. Should the decision be taken to return HMS Bridport to operational service, the cost of regeneration would depend on her material state and the plans for her future tasking at that time. Bridport was to have undergone a refit in 2002. However, in view of the decision to hold her in extended readiness, this work was not undertaken. Therefore, to regenerate her would require, as a minimum, an extended refit.

Hutton Report

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who in his Department saw the embargoed version of Lord Hutton's report. [152677]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer, which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 758W.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology Procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151039]

Mr. Caplin: In June 2003 the Ministry of Defence set up a centre of excellence covering all procurement issues. MOD has not attributed cost savings to the Centre of Excellence.

Iodine Tablets (Nuclear Submarine Berths)

Mr. Charles Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the reason was for the issuing of stable iodine tablets to members of the public living near the nuclear submarine berths at Loch Ewe and in Broadford Bay; and if he will make a statement. [147133]

Mr. Ingram: There is a berth at Aultbea (Loch Ewe) and a second at Broadford Bay that are designated as suitable for visits by operational nuclear-powered warships. Under the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations 2001 (REPPIR 2001), local authorities have responsibility for preparing an off-site emergency plan in the vicinity of such berths. Decisions on the distribution of Potassium Iodate Tablets form part of this planning activity.

The purpose of emergency planning is to ensure that procedures are in place to maximise public safety. Following a review, Wester Loch Ewe Community Council in consultation with NHS Highlands and Islands and the Northern Constabulary, and with advice from the Ministry of Defence, decided that the most practical and efficient means of ensuring that Potassium Iodate Tablets are readily available, in the very unlikely event of a nuclear incident at the Aultbea and Broadford Bay berths, would be to pre-distribute the tablets to the local population. The tablets have been distributed by the MOD, on behalf of the local authorities, to all properties, private and commercial, within a two kilometre radius of Aultbea and Broadford Bay within the last two weeks.

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Arabic speakers are employed by British forces in Iraq; in what situations they are employed; and from where they have been recruited. [145493]

Mr. Ingram: Arabic-speaking personnel working in Iraq include qualified interpreters who assist senior military and civilian officials, UK military specialists who mostly-deal with translation of classified information, interpreters employed in theatre (mainly Iraqis but also some Kuwaitis), civilians taken on locally to assist with general low-level communication with the Iraqi population and civilians locally recruited for some support and administrative tasks. The total number of Arabic speakers in Iraq is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Iraqi arms dumps have been discovered in Iraq since 1 May 2003; and if he will make a statement. [147172]

Mr. Ingram: As at 2 February 48 major Iraqi arms dumps had been identified in the Multinational Division (South East) area of responsibility. We are not in a position to comment on other areas of Iraq.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from members of the Iraqi Governing Council about alleged violations of human rights by coalition forces. [147664]

Mr. Ingram: We are not aware of any representations by members of the Iraqi Governing Council about alleged violations of human rights by coalition forces.

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to receive the result of the investigation into the killing of six Iraqis last weekend; who is carrying out the investigation; and if he will make a statement. [148509]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* During the crowd disturbance on 10 January in Al Amarah an Iraqi threw explosive devices at United Kingdom forces who were endeavouring to calm the situation. The Iraqi was preparing to throw a further device when he was shot and killed by a British soldier. In accordance with standard procedures the incident has been assessed by the local British Commander who concluded that the soldier acted fully within his Rules of Engagement.

The deaths of the other five Iraqi civilians were not caused by British forces. Any investigation will be a matter for the relevant Iraqi authorities.

Mrs. Liddell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the liaison between the Multinational Division (South East) and community and religious leaders in Basrah. [143743]

Mr. Ingram: There is a wide variety of liaison activities conducted with community and religious groups on a frequent basis including by the General Officer Commanding United Kingdom forces. Meetings are held on a one to one basis with community and other influential leaders, governors, clerics and police officials. Larger meetings are held with representative associations such as local, tribal and provincial councils, political parties and provincial security committees. In addition the Division liaises on a more informal basis with professional groupings such as lawyers and academics.

Military Equipment

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what riot control equipment is provided to British forces in the Gulf; in what circumstances this equipment is deployed; and whether it is available to all forces personnel who need it. [153049]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 5 February 2004]*: Seven riot control packs are currently provided to British forces in the Gulf. Each pack supplies an 80-man company and includes batons, shields, visor helmets and baton guns. This equipment is available to British forces personnel who are deployed to support the Iraqi police service in the maintenance of public order and is used in accordance with the Rules of Engagement for Operation Telic.

Ministry of Defence Police

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Ministry of Defence Police is expected to make efficiency savings. [152239]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) is required to identify, and make, efficiency savings through the departmental financial planning process.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Ministry of Defence Police stations have been closed in the past two years; and what representations he has received from police forces about the closure of Ministry of Defence Police stations. [152240]

Mr. Caplin: Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) station closures, during the last two years are detailed below:

MOD Police Station	*Date of closure*
RO Nottingham	8 February 2002
ATR Lichfield	25 March 2002
HMS Cambridge	31 March 2002
AFC Harrogate	29 July 2002
Netheravon	30 September 2002
West Freugh	30 September 2002
Longcross Barracks	30 November 2002
DERA Pendine	30 November 2002
DERA Shoeburyness	January 2003
HMS Forest Moor	31 October 2003
Feltham Station	30 January 2004

In addition, the MDP Agency Management Board have determined that MDP Area Policing Teams will be replaced by Divisional Support Groups (DSGs) in April 2004, involving some changes of locations. Mr. C. D. Lee, Deputy Chief Constable, Dorset Police and Mr. S. Long, Deputy Chief Constable, Wiltshire Constabulary, have both written to the Chief Constable, MDP about the planned MDP DSGs.

Naval Ships (Sales Abroad)

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Disposal Services Agency has given the Indian Government a quote for the sale of *(a)* HMS Invincible and *(b)* Sea Harrier FA2s. [152223]

Mr. Ingram: The Disposal Services Agency has had no communication with the Indian Government with regard to the sale of either HMS Invincible or Sea Harrier FA2s.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Disposals Services Agency has given the Chilean Government a quote for the sale of *(a)* Type 23 frigates and *(b)* Type 42 destroyers. [152224]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence maintains a dialogue with the Chilean Government with regard to Chile's future equipment requirements.

However, the Disposal Services Agency has made no formal proposals to the Chilean Government with regard to the sale of either Type 23 frigates or Type 42 destroyers.

Operation Telic (Helicopter Crashes)

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Board of Inquiry into the crash of two Sea King helicopters during Operation Telic will present its findings to his Department; and if he will make a statement. [152225]

Mr. Ingram: The Board of Inquiry reported on 29 April 2003. The Convening Officer at FLEET Headquarters confirmed that the BOI had fulfilled its Terms of Reference on 1 May 2003. Work was then undertaken by FLEET Headquarters to consider the recommendations, determine how matters could be taken forward and to consider the likely implications for other programmes and operations. This staffing work, which involved other agencies and included drawing up the timetable for implementing changes to operating procedures, was completed in November 2003.

A full technical investigation, undertaken in parallel by the Royal Navy Flight Safety and Accident Investigation Centre is still under way, and the report of its findings is not expected for some time. These findings will be given in a Military Aircraft Accident Summary that will be placed in the Library of the House in due course.

Procurement

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what monitoring system is in place to ensure consistency in the way that procurement competitions are held in each area of his Department. [151537]

Mr. Ingram: The MOD does not have a single monitoring system in place to ensure consistency in the way that procurement competitions are undertaken. However competitive tendering and evaluation procedures are supported by strong processes operating within well established policy, including formally delegated responsibility and authority, which in itself drives consistency of approach in line with both European Directives and national law. The quality, impartiality and competence of the procurement staff who apply this policy also ensures consistency.

RAF Machrihanish

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the suitability of RAF Machrihanish for storing radioactive waste. [153406]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 889W. RAF Machrihanish, along with a number of other sites, is currently being assessed for suitability to store radioactive material under Project ISOLUS. If any of these sites are found to be suitable in principle, public consultation, similar to that conducted at those sites already named in the outline proposals received from industry, will be undertaken.

Regimental Bands

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the current strength of each regimental band in the armed forces is; and if he will make a statement. [151189]

Mr. Ingram: The trained strength of each Services bands are as follows:

Regimental band

	Strength
Naval Service[1,2]	
Royal Marines Britannia Royal Naval College Band	40
Royal Marines Commando Training Centre Band	45
HQ Band Service	10
Royal Marines School of Music	35
Royal Marines Band Plymouth	70
Royal Marines Band Portsmouth	85
Royal Marines Band Scotland	45
Army[3,4]	
Life Guards	30
Blue and Royals	30
Dragoon Guards	30
Hussars and Light Dragoons	30
Royal Lancers	30
Royal Tank Regiment	30
Royal Artillery	45
Royal Engineers	35
Royal Signals	30
Grenadier Guards	50
Coldstream Guards	45
Scots Guards	50
Irish Guards	45
Welsh Guards	45
Highland	35
Lowland	30
Queens (Minden)	30
Queens (Normandy)	30
Kings (Waterloo)	35
Kings (Normandy)	35
Prince of Wales (Lucknow)	30
Prince of Wales (Clive)	35
Light Division	40
Royal Irish Regiment	35
Parachute	30
Army Air Corps	30
Royal Logistic Corps	35
Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	30
Adjutant General's Corps	
Gurkha (GURTAM)	
Royal Air Force[5,6]	
Central Band of the RAF	80
Band of the RAF Regiment	40
Music Detachment at Cranwell	40

[1] Royal Marines band service data provided by DASA.
[2] Strength as at 1 December 2003 and excludes 20 personnel not assigned to a Band unit. These individuals are usually deployed as Volunteer Band Instructors.
[3] Data supplied by Corps of Army Music (CAM).
[4] Strength as at 30 January 2004.
[5] Officers Music Branch and Other Ranks Musicians data supplied by DASA.
[6] Strength as at 1 December 2003 and excludes 10 personnel based at HQ Music Services in Uxbridge.
Note:
All figures include Officers and Other Ranks and have been rounded to the nearest five.

South African Defence Minister (Visit)

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* ministers and *(b)* officials from his Department met the former South African Defence Minister, Mr. Joe Modise, when he visited the UK during 1998; and whether his Department was informed of the visit by Mr. Modise to the UK and of the purpose of his visit. [151396]

Mr. Ingram: The former South African Defence Minister, Mr. Joe Modise met with Ministers and officials of the Ministry of Defence both in the United Kingdom and overseas in 1997. No record has been identified of an official visit to the UK in 1998 by Mr. Modise.

Spearfish Torpedo

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress in replacing the Spearfish heavyweight torpedo. [152005]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is currently considering potential replacements for the Spearfish torpedo as part of its Submarine Launched Underwater Weapon programme. This is in the Concept Phase of its Acquisition Cycle and a number of possible enhancements are being investigated.

Welsh Regiments and Battalions

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* regiments based in Wales were deployed in Iraq and *(b)* soldiers from Welsh battalions are stationed in Iraq. [151741]

Mr. Ingram: The only regiment currently based in Wales to have deployed to Iraq is the 14th Signal Regiment.

Approximately 480 soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales and approximately 30 territorial army soldiers from the Royal Welch Regiment, are currently deployed on Operation Telic.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children's Centres

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what health care is provided to children in children's centres. [151121]

Margaret Hodge: Children's centres provide an opportunity for the enhancement and reshaping of health services for families with young children in the most disadvantaged areas of England. Services will vary according to local need but all children's centres must provide access to child and family health services. These services will include:

ante-natal advice and support for parents;

information and guidance on breast feeding, hygiene, nutrition and safety;

identification, support and care for those suffering from maternal depression, ante-natally and post-natally;

speech and language and other specialist support; and

smoking cessation interventions.

Health professionals will work with other Early Years professionals in education, family support and child care to ensure children's needs are met in an integrated way.

Access Premium

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what amount of Access Premium has been allocated to each higher education institution. [153064]

Alan Johnson: The amount of funding for widening access and improving retention for each higher education institution in 2003/04 is set out in table 1 of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) publication 'Recurrent Grants for 2003–04, final allocations (2003/53)'. A copy of this document is available on the HEFCE's website athttp://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2003/03_53/.

Access to Education

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether he enforces the statutory guidance document on access to education for children and young people with medical needs of November 2001; [151853]

(2) when he last had reason to intervene in a local education authority's failure to implement the statutory guidance contained within the access to education for children and young people with medical needs document of November 2001; how many times in each of the last two years he has had to intervene; and what plans he has to update these guidelines. [151854]

Margaret Hodge: In November 2001, the Department for Education and Skills, jointly with the Department of Health, published statutory guidance, "Access to Education for Children and Young People with Medical Needs", which sets out national minimum standards of education for those children and young people who cannot attend school due to illness. This is statutory guidance and local education authorities (LEAs) must have regard to it. The needs of this group of children and young people are often complex. There is therefore an expectation that LEAs should be sensible in their implementation of the guidance.

The DfES has been working to ensure that LEAs and schools are aware of their responsibilities under the guidance. The DfES has sponsored research on mapping best practice, including self evaluation tools for those working in the field. Also, Ofsted published last year a survey report on education provision for children with medical needs. A series of seminars is planned this year to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the Ofsted report and to further raise awareness of the statutory guidance.

The guidance flows from section 19 of the Education Act 1996, which places a duty on LEAs to provide "suitable education" for children of compulsory school age who cannot attend school because they are ill or excluded. The Secretary of State has not issued any directions to LEAs in the last two years for failing to provide suitable education for children who cannot attend school due to illness.

Feedback on the guidance from those working with children and young people with medical needs is that it has had a positive impact. There are therefore no current plans to update the guidance.

Children's Fund

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what grants have been made from the Children's Fund since it was set up. [152017]

Margaret Hodge: The Children's Fund programme was launched in November 2001 to fund the delivery of preventative services through 149 partnerships for 5 to 13-year-olds at risk. £187 million was made available to Children's Fund partnerships under in the 2000 Spending Review and £450 million in the 2002 Spending Review. The funding has mainly been distributed through the local partnerships. However, £21 million has been allocated to street crime initiative; £25 million to the development of the identification, and tracking project; £5.4 million for small grants to support for example child contact centres and £2.2 million for Young Recovery Projects.

Children's Homes

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will provide the latest available figures for the number of places for children in privately-run children's homes in each county in England. [151315]

Margaret Hodge: Figures on the number of places for children in privately-run children's homes in each county in England are not collected by this Department. Information at 19 January 2004 is available from the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) and

their most recent figures, collected by NCSC region, are shown in the table. Information is not available at county level.

Number of independent places in privately-run children's homes at 19 January 2004

NCSC region	*Number*
North West	1,000
South East	992
London	693
South West	660
West Midlands	658
East Midlands	287
Yorkshire and Humber	272
Eastern	252
North East	166
England	4,980

Source:
National Care Standards Commission.

Children's Services

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much earmarked funding has been provided to local authorities for children's services in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [146732]

Margaret Hodge: For financial years 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06, planned funding to be provided to local authorities for children's services is as follows:

	£
2003–04	3,698,784
2004–05	4,020,538
2005–06	4,372,191

Figures given comprise all grants to be paid to local authorities for children's services and the Children's Social Services Formula Spending Share. Further information is available in the Local Authority Social Service Letter (2003) 7, copies of which are in the Library of the House. For planned expenditure on education services, I would refer the hon. Member to the Department of Education and Skills Annual Report for 2002–03, copies of which are also available in the Library of the House.

Correspondence

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will reply to the letter to Mr. Simon Rhodes, dated 15 July 2003, which was sent by special delivery on 17 July and signed for by his representatives on 18 July (Royal Mail's reference: SU 4643 1881 8GB). [151577]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Unfortunately, the letter in question does not appear to have reached the intended recipient in our Special Educational Needs Division. I offer my apologies to the hon. Member and his constituent for that and any difficulties it may have caused. However, since then Baroness Ashton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Sure Start, has sent two detailed replies dated 21 October and 19 December 2003 to the hon. Member in response to points raised.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he takes to ensure that documents received by Royal Mail special delivery are *(a)* recorded as such and *(b)* tracked within his Department. [151578]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department has procedures in place for recording and tracking documents received by Royal Mail special delivery. Our procedures require a signature to be obtained from the end customer, as well as the mailroom, and then recorded for tracking purposes across Headquarter sites. However, procedures for special delivery documents at Sanctuary Buildings had been slightly different but have now been standardised in line with all the other Headquarter sites with immediate effect.

Deaths in Care

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have died in care since 1992; and what proportion of these deaths have been of people from ethnic minorities. [147535]

Margaret Hodge: The estimated number of children who died in care in England during the ten year period 1 April 1992 to 31 March 2002 was 620.

We believe that quite a large proportion of the children who died in care were severely disabled children or children with chronic illnesses being looked after in hospices/hospitals because they are too ill to be at home.

Information on the number of children in care by ethnic origin has only been collected for the last 2 years from a one in three sample. The number of deaths to such children in ethnic minorities over that period are very small and therefore it is not possible to produce a reliable estimate of the proportion.

Tuition Fees

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what arrangements will be made for the repayment of fees by graduates who choose to leave the country and work overseas. [152412]

Alan Johnson: Well established procedures already exist for recovery of loans from graduates living and working outside of the UK. When taking out a loan, all students sign a declaration agreeing to repay, even if they move abroad, and SLC have a range of sanctions that can be imposed on any defaulters.

Higher Education

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what amount has been set aside for centres for excellence in learning and teaching. [153069]

Alan Johnson: £315 million is being made available by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, over the five year period from 2004–05 to 2008–09, for Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Failing Schools

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools were classified as failing in each year since 1996–97. [149874]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The number of schools placed in special measures for each of the last seven years and in the first term of the current academic year is:

Academic year	*Secondary*	*Primary*
1996/97	26	150
1997/98	42	210
1998/99	30	141
1999/2000	38	168
2000/01	23	100
2001/02	19	94
2002/03	35	99

Figures for autumn term 2003, following implementation of the new Ofsted Inspection Framework from September 2003

	2003/04[1]
Secondary	29
Primary	54

[1] May reduce pending final corroboration.

Over this period 1,137 schools have recovered from special measures. The number of schools in special measures was 515 at the end of the 1997/98 academic year. The total has now reduced to 318 at the end of autumn term 2003.

Foundation Degrees

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding the Learning and Skills Council will provide to higher education institutions for foundation degrees. [152727]

Alan Johnson: The Learning and Skills Council does not fund Foundation Degrees. The responsibility for funding Foundation Degrees rests with the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students he plans to be studying foundation degree courses by 2010. [152652]

Alan Johnson: We anticipate that there will be about 50,000 places on foundation degree courses by 2006. Plans for student numbers, including those taking foundation degrees, for 2005–06 to 2007–08 will be determined as part of the current spending review which will conclude later this year.

Further Education/Higher Education

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of young people between the ages of 16 and 21 years are studying at further education colleges, excluding A-Level and GCSE students. [152691]

Alan Johnson: At the end of 2002, 17 per cent. of young people aged 16–21 in England were studying at further education colleges, excluding A-Level and GCSE students.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the range of further education qualifications. [152688]

Alan Johnson: A full range of qualifications accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and funded by the Learning and Skills Council is approved for use by people under 19, The full list can be accessed through the Department's website at www.dfes.gsi.gov.uk/section96.

The Learning and Skills Council may fund any course for use by persons over the age of 19, but may only make payments to awarding bodies in respect of their fees for qualifications approved under section 97 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. A full list of the qualifications approved under section 97 can be accessed through the Department's website at www.dfes.gsi.gov.uk/section97.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition he uses of the terms *(a)* further education and *(b)* higher education. [152655]

Alan Johnson: Both further and higher education are defined in statute. The definition of further education is to be found at s.2(3) to (6) of the Education Act 1996.

In essence 'further education' means:

a. full-time and part-time education suitable to the requirements of persons who are over compulsory school age (including vocational, social, physical and recreational training), and

b. organised leisure-time occupation provided in connection with the provision of such education,

except that it does not include secondary education or higher education.

The Act of Parliament which defines courses of higher education is the Education Reform Act 1988. Schedule 6 of the Act describes courses of higher education as:

(a) a course for the further training of teachers or youth and community workers;

(b) a post-graduate course (including a higher degree course);

(c) a first degree course;

(d) a course for the Diploma of Higher Education;

(e) a course for the Higher National Diploma or Higher National Certificate of the Business and Technician Education Council, or the Diploma in Management Studies;

(f) a course for the Certificate in Education;

(g) a course in preparation for a professional examination at higher level;

(h) a course providing education at a higher level (whether or not in preparation for an examination).

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on Sure Start badged higher education and further education courses. [152686]

Margaret Hodge: The Sure Start Unit does not badge any qualifications but works with the sector and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to agree the acceptable list of qualifications. As part of the Government's drive to improve the level of qualifications and contribute to the development of the Early Years sector workforce, the Sure Start Unit worked with universities and employers to create in September 2002 the Early Years Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree (EYSEFD): a new, vocational higher education qualification at level 4 that leads to a new level of professional practice known as the 'Senior Practitioner'. The DfES, on behalf of the sector,

formally recognises whether universities have met the Statement of Requirement for EYSEFD. There are now 44 universities and 96 affiliated colleges across England who offer the EYSEFD.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the successor arrangements to academic review for directly funded higher education provision in further education colleges. [152510]

Alan Johnson: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 657W.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the process is for accessing funds in the Higher Education Innovation Fund. [152641]

Alan Johnson: The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has invited higher education institutions to apply for funds from the Higher Education Innovation Fund. Guidance published on 9 December 2003 asked for applications to be submitted to HEFCE by 25 February. Assessment of applications will be complete in May and successful applicants will have clear access to funds from August 2004.

Knowledge Exchanges

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the linkages between the research status of a higher education institution and its ability to attract high quality teaching staff. [152650]

Alan Johnson: Available evidence on a positive link between teaching and research is inconclusive. There are many examples of Higher Education Institutions in England which attract and deliver high quality teaching without carrying out research. My Department has commissioned a large-scale study to find out which factors are most important in affecting academics' decisions to enter or leave Higher Education Institutions. This research will be published next winter.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the cost to a higher education institution of applying for funding to establish a knowledge exchange. [152653]

Alan Johnson: Information on the costs and benefits associated with the proposal to establish a knowledge exchange is contained in the Regulatory Impact Assessment published on 8 January alongside the Higher Education Bill. Copies of the Regulatory Impact Assessment were placed in the Library of the House; it is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on knowledge exchanges; and how much money has been set aside to pay for them. [152654]

Alan Johnson: £16 million is being provided for up to 20 Knowledge Exchanges within the overall distribution of the Higher Education Innovation Fund over the two years 2004–05 and 2005–06. Knowledge Exchanges will promote the critical role of less research intensive departments/groups in transferring technologies and knowledge, and in skills development, within local communities of practice.

Personal Advisers

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what sanctions have been imposed by the Connexions Service against personal advisers describing themselves as careers advisers; and if he will make a statement. [153059]

Margaret Hodge: I am not aware of any Connexions Partnerships imposing sanctions on people who refer to themselves as Careers advisers. We have asked Connexions partnerships to avoid a confusion of titles by referring to all practitioners, whatever their specialism, as Personal Advisers. We recognise the important role in the service played by professionals with a careers guidance qualification, but Personal Advisers offer a broader service to young people which cannot be adequately described through reference to a single specialist area.

Research Grants

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total allocation of research grant to each higher education institution in England and Wales was in each of the past six years. [141138]

Alan Johnson: The available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) finance records and is given in the table that has been placed in the Library.

School Buildings

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which education authority is regarded by his Department as having the greatest need for renewal of school buildings. [152953]

Mr. Miliband: We are in the course of assessing data on the suitability and condition needs of school buildings provided to us by authorities as part of the asset management process and will shortly be making information available. This will help to show the relative needs of authorities' schools in regard to suitability and condition. These needs are however usually only one of the factors that are taken into account in decisions to school renew buildings.

Student Finance

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the demographic changes to the number of students liable to pay top-up fees over each of the 10 years from 2006; and if he will make a statement. [152573]

Alan Johnson: Demographic changes will mean an increase in student numbers up to 2010. The number of students affected by variable fees will depend on a wide range of factors, including decisions on fee levels to be taken by institutions providing higher education to full-time undergraduates.

Planned total number of students 2005/06 to 2007/08 will be set as part of the current spending review which will conclude later this year.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the governance structure is of the Student Loans Company; and whether it is an incorporated body. [152660]

Alan Johnson: The Student Loans Company is incorporated under the Companies Acts 1985. It has been designated an executive non-departmental public body (NDPB) by the Cabinet Office. The arrangements for internal governance are set out in its annual report which is placed in both Houses of Parliament Libraries.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much grant he has provided to higher education institutions for foundation degree students in this financial year. [152683]

Alan Johnson: The Higher Education Funding Council for England estimate that they will make £59 million available to higher education institutions for foundation degree students in the current academic year.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England is responsible for distribution of funding to higher education institutions for foundation degree courses. The Council funds higher education institutions on the basis of academic years (August to July), therefore the figures provided relate to August 2003 to July 2004.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what powers he plans to take to restrict the level of fee charged for a foundation degree; [152733]

(2) what his policy is on the charging of tuition fees to foundation degree students. [152689]

Alan Johnson: The Higher Education Bill contains powers that will enable us, from 2006, to limit the level of fees for all degrees, including foundation degrees, to no more than £3,000, provided a higher education institution has an access agreement approved by the Office for Fair Access, or to a basic amount—expected to be £1,200—if a higher education institution does not have an access agreement.

Students taking foundation degrees will be subject to tuition fees on the same basis as students on other full time undergraduate courses.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial support he plans to make available from his Department to mature students in higher education institutions. [152736]

Alan Johnson: Our proposals for 2006/07 are designed to help higher education students generally but one in particular will be of especial help to mature students. We expect a third of all those getting the grant of £2,700 to be independent students although they are a much smaller percentage of all students. Mature students will also benefit from the increases in the levels of student loans, the raising of the repayment threshold from £10,000 to £15,000 and the 25-year cap on the repayment period.

Existing targeted support already helps certain mature students who are eligible for a range of additional grants such as the child care grant and parent's learning allowance, for student parents, the disabled students allowance and the adult dependants grant dependants grant. In addition, student parents are eligible to receive child tax credit from the Inland Revenue.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total estimated cost is of educational maintenance allowances in each of the next three years. [152784]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The estimated cost of the national EMA scheme for each of the next three years is:

2004–05—cost £238 million—estimated number of young people on EMA 274,000

2005–06—cost £374 million—estimated number of young people on EMA 390,000

2006–07—cost £462 million—estimated number of young people on EMA 439,000

PRIME MINISTER

Antarctic

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the President of the United States and *(b)* others regarding the protection of the Antarctic from physical exploitation; and if he will make a statement. [152969]

The Prime Minister: I regularly have discussions with President Bush and others on a wide range of international issues including on the environment.

However, I have not had any recent discussions regarding the protection of the Antarctic environment from physical exploitation.

The 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty sets out a framework for the comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment, including from physical exploitation. Under the Protocol, all activities within Antarctica must be planned and conducted as to limit adverse impacts on the Antarctic environment. The Antarctic Act 1994 ensures adherence to the provisions of the Protocol within the UK.

BBC

Mr. Gale: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of his letter dated 19 March 2003 to Mr. Greg Dyke in his capacity as Director General of the BBC; [153478]

(2) if he will list the telephone calls made by Mr. Alastair Campbell to members of BBC staff between 12 March 2003 and 14 April 2003. [153479]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for West Derbyshire (Mr. McLoughlin) in the debate on Lord Button's report on 4 February, *Official Report*, column 768.

Business Social and Environmental Impact Reports

Andy King: To ask the Prime Minister if he will restate his challenge of October 2000 that all the FTSE 350 companies should publish annual environmental reports by the end of 2005. [154275]

The Prime Minister: I still believe that our largest companies should take up the challenge of publishing annual environmental reports. The White Paper on Modernising Company Law (CM5553) published in July 2002 included a proposal to require economically significant companies to include information on environmental, social and community issues amongst others in a new Operating and Financial Review, where these issues are judged by directors to be essential to an understanding of the company's business. This should provide further encouragement for directors to consider seriously their company's impact on the environment.

Butler Committee

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Prime Minister what selection procedures were used to appoint the chair to the committee investigating intelligence sources in the events before the invasion of Iraq; and what assessment he made of the views of prospective members of the committee on whether the Government was right to go to war when deciding on its composition. [153247]

The Prime Minister: Following precedent, I chose individuals of standing and relevant experience including members of the Intelligence and Security Committee to conduct this task. I am very grateful to Lord Butler and the members of his Review team for agreeing to undertake this task. I made no assessment of their views on the decision to go to war in Iraq.

Mr. Cash: To ask the Prime Minister whether he intends Lord Butler's Committee to report on differences between *(a)* the intelligence gathered, evaluated and used by the Government before the conflict and *(b)* the intelligence and what has been discovered by the Iraq Survey Group since the end of the conflict. [154214]

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Mr. Straw), set out the terms of reference for Lord Butler's review on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 625–28. It is for Lord Butler to determine, within those terms of reference, the scope of his report.

Departmental Minutes

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister what action he is taking to ensure that civil servants take full and adequate minutes of meetings involving himself. [152959]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the right hon. Member for North-West Hampshire (Sir George Young) during my evidence to the Liaison Committee on 3 February 2004.

Freedom of Information Act

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if he will implement recommendation 8.1 of the Independent Review of Government Communications, on the use by Ministers of the right of veto with regard to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [152960]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement made by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Alexander) on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 50–51WS.

Greyhounds (Northern Ireland)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Prime Minister which Minister is responsible for the welfare of racing greyhounds in Northern Ireland; and what proposals there are to include the welfare of greyhounds in forthcoming legislation. [153530]

The Prime Minister: Under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 all animals are protected from unnecessary cruelty or suffering though there are no specific provisions on the welfare of racing greyhounds. This Act is administered by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland for which the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office (Mr. Pearson) is currently the responsible Minister. There are no proposals to introduce legislation on the welfare of greyhounds in Northern Ireland.

Honours System

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister what steps he is taking to improve transparency surrounding the honours system. [152957]

The Prime Minister: The Cabinet Secretary has asked Sir Hayden Phillips to lead a review of the honours system. This review will look at ways in which the system can be made more open and transparent, while maintaining the necessary confidentiality about individuals involved in it. I look forward to receiving their findings.

Hutton Inquiry

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister what efforts have been made to identify the three additional sources of information within the wider intelligence community mentioned by Mr. Andrew Gilligan in his evidence to the Hutton Inquiry. [153901]

The Prime Minister: Mr. Gilligan's evidence to the Hutton Inquiry is a matter for him.

Iraq

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister if he will place in the Library the complete report of the Iraq Survey Group. [153081]

The Prime Minister: The report is the responsibility of the United States authorities, specifically the Director of Central Intelligence. Publication of the complete report is a matter for them.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister for what reason, following intelligence assessments by the Joint Intelligence Committee in October and December 2002 and in March 2003, the Government did not support the request by UN inspectors for more time to complete their searches. [153432]

The Prime Minister: As I have said previously, Iraq was in material breach of 23 out of 27 obligations set by 9 UN Security Council resolutions over 12 years. The primary objective of UN Security Council resolution 1441 was the disarmament of Iraq and made clear that compliance must be full, unconditional and immediate, including the requirement to co-operate fully with the weapons inspectors.

Iraq ignored that requirement; what co-operation it offered was grudging and partial, and was outweighed by the obstacles it raised to the inspectors' work. In light of this, we concluded that the UN weapons inspectors would never be able to complete the task allocated to them by the Security Council under resolution 1441.

As I made repeatedly clear at the time, the issue was not about time, it was about full co-operation. If the Iraqi regime had been co-operating, the inspectors could have had more time.

And as the evidence from Dr. David Kay to the US Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing on Iraqi WMD and related programmes on 28 January 2004 made clear, in his opinion: "All I can say is that among an extensive body of UN—of Iraqi scientists who were talking to us, they have said: "The UN interviewed us. We did not tell them the truth. We did not show them this equipment. We did not talk about these programs. We couldn't do it as long as Saddam was in power." I suspect regardless of how long they had stayed, that attitude would have been the same". Full transcripts of this evidence have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what efforts have been made by the Government to interview *(a)* Scott Ritter, *(b)* Hans Von Sponeck, *(c)* Denis Halliday and *(d)* Tun Myat in relation to Iraqi military capabilities and intentions. [153751]

The Prime Minister: The Iraq Survey Group is interviewing anyone who it believes will be able to help its enquiries. It has not interviewed any of these individuals. Any relevant information which they may have had was made available to the United Nations.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what arrangements he has put in place to monitor evidence presented to the United States Administration's inquiry into the intelligence on Iraq's military programme. [153897]

The Prime Minister: We shall be monitoring the US inquiry closely.

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister which hon. and right hon. Members were *(a)* asked by him to comment on a draft version of the September dossier, *(b)* given a briefing by Sir John Scarlett in advance of publication and *(c)* given an advance copy pre-publication. [153902]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Paul Flynn) on 18 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 870W, and on 15 October 2003, *Official Report*, columns 233–34W. My right hon. Friend the Attorney-General (Lord Goldsmith) was also briefed on 19 September 2002.

In addition, members of the Cabinet were provided with an advance copy of the dossier prior to its publication.

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister whether a complete list of those who were asked to comment on draft versions of the 24 September dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction was provided to members of the Intelligence and Security Committee for the purpose of its inquiry published in September 2003 on weapons of mass destruction and intelligence assessment. [153931]

The Prime Minister: No. The Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) did not request such a list.

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister what actions he has taken to take forward the Lisbon Agenda. [153452]

The Prime Minister: The UK is one of the most active supporters of the Lisbon Agenda. We are working closely with the Irish Presidency to ensure the Spring Council delivers concrete conclusions which will push forward economic reform in Europe. We will also be using the Summit on 18 February with France and Germany to boost progress in this field.

The Treasury will issue a detailed review of progress against Lisbon commitments in the next few weeks. Copies will be placed in the House Library.

Minister of State (Transport)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Prime Minister if he will dismiss the Minister of State at the Department for Transport. [153428]

The Prime Minister: No.

Ministerial Gifts

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the gifts received by Ministers between January 1998 and June 2001 in accordance with the recommendation by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration in her report of 7 July 2003. [152958]

The Prime Minister: In March 2003, I published a list of all gifts received by Ministers since June 2001 valued at more than £140. Copies of the list are available in the Library of the House. The Government are also committed to publishing a list of gifts valued at more than £140 on an annual basis. The list of gifts for 2003–04 will be published as soon as possible after the end of this financial year.

The Government's position on the publication of gifts received by Ministers between January 1998 and June 2001 remains as set out in paragraph 43 of the sixth report of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (session 2002–03).

Ministerial Visits

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister when he next plans to make an official visit to *(a)* Denmark and *(b)* Sweden. [152972]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so.

Public Holidays

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make 21 October 2005 a National Public Holiday. [153828]

The Prime Minister: Although such requests for public holidays are kept under constant review, at present there are no current plans to change the pattern of public holidays.

Remembrance Wreaths

Mr. Gray: To ask the Prime Minister which departmental budget pays for the wreath which he lays at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. [153352]

The Prime Minister: This is the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office which comes under the departmental budget of the Cabinet Office.

United States

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister when he last spoke with the United States *(a)* President and *(b)* Secretary of State. [154081]

The Prime Minister: I regularly have discussions with President Bush and others on a wide range of international issues. As with previous Administrations, it is not the practice of this Government to make public details of all discussions with foreign governments.

Water Pricing

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* discussions and *(b)* correspondence he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding the periodic review of water pricing, with particular reference to the cost of environmental measures. [152971]

The Prime Minister: I have regular meetings and discussions with ministerial colleagues and others on a wide range of subjects and will continue to do so. As with previous Administrations, it is not my practice to provide details of confidential discussions, under exemption 2 of the code of practice on access to Government information.

HEALTH

Alzheimer's

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, following the Ombudsman's ruling in the case against Cambridgeshire Health Authority on the funding of Alzheimers sufferers, he will give guidance that primary care trusts should take into account the psychological needs of people suffering from dementia and residing in residential homes in making NHS assessments. [153101]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no current plans to issue further guidance on continuing care.

The current guidance (HSC: 2001/015: LAC (2001)18) makes clear at Annex C that one of the issues to consider when establishing criteria for continuing care is whether the individual has 'a medical, physical or mental health condition' which may require National Health Service care.

Angiography

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of waiting times for angiography were in each of the last six years. [147269]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The average length of waiting times for angiography for the last six years are shown in the table.

	Mean waiting time for angiography (days)	*Angiograms (finished consultant episodes)*
1997–98	96.6	82,408
1998–99	98.7	94,631
1999–2000	90.7	99,170
2000–01	98.4	108,739
2001–02	97.8	113,847
2002–03	104.1	124,353

The Government set explicit targets for reductions in angiography waiting times for the first time ever last year and no one will wait more than nine months by March 2004.

£65 million from the New Opportunities Fund and £60 million from the Department of Health is being invested to enable the rapid expansion of facilities for angiography, to fund more than 89 new or replacement catheterisation laboratories. This will help meet the target of a six-month maximum wait by the end of 2005.

Anti-depressants and Ritalin

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the NHS of prescribing *(a)* anti-depressant drugs and *(b)* Ritalin was for each year since 1985–86; what his estimate is of the cost for 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [153017]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of prescription items and the net ingredient cost of all anti-depressant drugs, and all Ritalin drugs dispensed in the community in England, from 1985 to 2003–04 (April to September only) has been placed in the Library.

The Department of Health does not estimate prescription figures. However, data for both antidepressant drugs and for Methylphenidate Hydrochloride appear to be a rising trend, and the data for the first half of 2003–04 suggest that the total 2003–04 figure will be higher than the 2002–03 figure.

Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the board members of Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust in each of the last four years. [152153]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The people who have served on the board of the trust since its establishment in June 2000 are:

Past Board Members

Mr. Vijay Vasu (Chair—from establishment to April 2003)

Mr. Terry Williams (non-executive—from establishment in 2000 to July 2003);

Mrs. Hilda Aitken (non-executive—from establishment to November 2003)

Mrs. Yvonne Cornell (non-executive—from establishment in 2000 to November 2003)

Dr. Mary Springham (non-executive—from establishment in 2000 to 31 January 2004)

Current Board Members

Mr. Ian Kirkpatrick (Chair—from 1 August 2003)

Dr. Faiz Alam Noor (non-executive—from January 2001)

Mr. John Griffin (non-executive—from January 2004)

Mr. Mark Hicks (non-executive—from January 2004)

Ms Alison Ward (non-executive—from January 2004)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints have been made to Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust in each of the last four years; and how many have been upheld. [152159]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals National Health Service Trust was formed as a result of a merger of the Redbridge Health Care NHS Trust and the Havering Hospitals NHS Trust on 1 April 2001. Figures for complaints made to each organisation are shown in the table. Information on complaints upheld is not collected centrally.

Complaints made to Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust 1999–03

	Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust	*Havering Hospitals NHS Trust*	*Redbridge Health Care NHS Trust*
1999–2000	—	547	566
2000–01	—	540	628
2001–02	[1]—	—	—
2002–03	975	—	—

[1] Not available.

Care Direct Scheme

Mr. Paul Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons his Department did not roll out the Care Direct scheme. [154147]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given him on 3 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 64W.

Children's Nurses

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many different types of children's specialist nurse there are. [145692]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department of Health does not hold this information centrally.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council only records the following post-registration specialist qualifications relevant to children: school nursing and community children's nursing. There are a wide range of children's specialist nurses working in the National Health Service in posts developed in response to local needs, for example: specialists in intensive care; neonatology; dermatology; child protection and diabetes.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the letter of the hon. Member for Northavon of 8 September 2003 (his reference PQ 1035979), on behalf of Mrs. Ruth Davis. [152117]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 29 January 2004.

Delayed Hospital Discharge

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of setting up operational, financial and computer systems to manage the fining system for bed blocking; [152761]

(2) how many extra care management staff have been employed to manage the fining system for bed blocking, broken down by *(a)* strategic health authority and *(b)* local authority; [152762]

(3) how much local authorities have been charged in fines for delayed discharge in January, broken down by local authority; [152763]

(4) how many beds are classified as fineable and could potentially attract charges for delayed discharge. [152807]

Dr. Ladyman: The cost of fulfilling the requirements of the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003 was estimated at £5.5 million in the regulatory impact assessment for the Bill. Most of this cost is around improving the communication between the national health service and social services so that each patient's discharge is planned as effectively as possible. Financial systems for charging will be a small part, and minimal in areas where performance is good.

Care management staff do not manage the system of charging; they assess and arrange the care that people need. There is no central record of the number of additional care managers who have been recruited to improve the quality and timeliness of the care packages which patients receive.

I refer the hon. Member to my response to the hon. Member for West Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) on 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1064W on the payment of charges in January.

Charges for delayed discharge are based on the patient, not the bed which they are occupying, so numbers will vary depending on the patients in hospital. Currently, charges are potentially payable for a patient who has been receiving acute hospital care and needs community care services from social services in order to be safely discharged. There is only a liability for a charge when that patient is delayed solely because of a lack of social services.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of dental academics teaching dental students in each year since 1990; and if he will make a statement. [152829]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of dental academics in each year since 1990 is not held centrally. A survey undertaken by Universities UK in 2001 showed that there were 476 academic posts in the 15 dental schools in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the problem of clinical dental technicians illegally performing dental procedures in the UK; and if he will make a statement; [152830]

(2) how many prosecutions of clinical dental technicians working illegally in the UK there were in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [152831]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the number of prosecutions for illegal dental practice undertaken by the General Dental Council (GDC). These do not all involve technicians.

General Dental Council: illegal practice prosecutions 2002–04

	Total prosecutions	*Total convictions*
2000	3	3
2001	20	19
2002	7	7
2003	10	9
2004	2	1

The Department is working with the GDC to provide for the registration of appropriately trained clinical dental technicians. An Order to amend the Dentists Act 1984 is being drafted under Section 60 of the Health Act 1999 which, after the necessary consultations, will be laid before Parliament later this year.

General Practitioners

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there were per head of population in *(a)* Brent East, *(b)* Brent Primary Care trust area, *(c)* London and *(d)* England on the latest date for which figures are available. [149900]

Mr. Hutton: The latest comparative figures available for general practitioners (GP) in England, London and Brent primary care trust (PCT) is for 2001 and is shown in the table.

Between 2001 and 2002 the number of whole-time equivalent GPs in Brent PCT has increased by 15.

The Department of Health collects figures by PCT only, not by constituency.

General Medical Practitioners per 100,000 population

Estimated whole-time equivalents

England as at 30 September 2001	*All practitioners*[1]	*Population*	*Practitioners per 100,000 population*
England	28,854	49,389,736	58.4
Of which:			
London	4,261	7,307,911	58.3
Of which:			
Brent PCT	167	263,629	63.4

[1] All Practitioners include GMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs, PMS Salaried GPs, Restricted Principals, Assistants, GP Registrars, Salaried Doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS Other and GP Retainers.

Notes:

WTE data has been estimated using the results from the 1992-93 GMP Workload Survey;

Full-time = 1.00 wte; three quarter time = 0.69 wte; job share = 0.65 wte; half time = 0.60 wte.

Source:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics 2001 ONS Population Census.

Height and Weight Monitoring (Young Children)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy for the *(a)* height and *(b)* weight of (i) pre-school, (ii) infant school and (iii) junior school children to be monitored on a regular basis. [154143]

Dr. Ladyman: Height and weight measurements in early childhood form a part of the child health surveillance programme. Intervals between checks are determined by the primary health care team in the light of professional judgement. Height and weight monitoring after school entry is undertaken on a selective basis when there is concern about a child's health or growth.

Life Expectancy

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the effect of obesity on life expectancy; and what research his Department has commissioned into projected levels of life expectancy of the population of the UK in this century. [152181]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The National Audit Office report, Tackling Obesity in England, published in 2001, found that deaths linked to obesity shortened life by an average of nine years.

The Government Actuary's Department report, published in December 2003, projected the average life expectancy at birth would increase from 75.9 years in 2002 to 81.0 in 2031 for men and from 80.5 years to 84.9 years for women over the same period.

Mindnseek Website

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hits have been recorded for the website mindnseek.net since it was established; and what evaluation of the project has been undertaken. [149863]

Ms Rosie Winterton: From its launch in February 2003 until October 2003 (the most recent time for which figures are available), there were 3,179,390 hits for the mindnseek website. The average time spent on the site in this time was 41 minutes.

Evaluation of the Read the Signs campaign, of which the mindnseek website is a component, was conducted between March and April 2003. A copy of the Report of Findings has been placed in the Library. Further evaluation of the website will be carried out as part of the overall "mind out for mental health" campaign evaluation at the end of the current financial year.

NHS Bank

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* budget, *(b)* turnover and *(c)* outturn was for the NHS Bank in each of the last three years. [151568]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is shown in the following table.

NHS Bank Special Assistance for last three years

£ million

	Budget	*Allocated*	*Expenditure*
2001–02	0	0	0
2002–03	100	100	100
2003–04	152	152	152

NHS Budgets

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he has taken to ensure that primary care trusts serving areas where targets for additional housing have been set under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's community plan will be provided with sufficient *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital funding to meet consequential changes in demand for health services; [151635]

(2) what steps are being taken to meet budget requirements of each primary care trust serving areas of expanding population in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06. [151705]

Mr. Hutton: Revenue allocations for the provision of healthcare, made to primary care trusts (PCTs) for 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced on 11 December 2002. There are no plans to revisit these allocations.

Any changes in PCT population figures will be taken into account for the next round of allocations. Preparatory work for the next allocations round, covering the period up to 2007–08, will commence shortly.

The Department of Health has started to analyse the impact on health care need of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister growth area initiative. This is ongoing work and we are still considering the appropriateness of providing additional funding for these areas.

NHS Buildings

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards the target of reducing the value of NHS building backlog maintenance by 25 per cent. by 2004. [150043]

Mr. Hutton: NHS Estates collects data on backlog maintenance from national health service trusts through its Estates Return Information Collection (ERIC). The latest data relate to 2002–03 and these remain the subject of a statistical validation exercise which will be completed shortly. Once the validation exercise is complete I will write to the hon. Member.

NHS Governance

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria the Health Ombudsman uses in deciding whether to investigate a complaint against a health authority; and what assessment the Ombudsman makes of convenors' reports in making decisions about investigating complaints. [152156]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This is a matter for the Health Service Ombudsman.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he issues to health authorities on the timescale for dealing with complaints. [152157]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Guidance on the operation the national health service complaints procedure was issued in March 1996, including details on the performance targets for dealing with complaints. The guidance is available on the Department's website at www.doh.gov.uk/complaints.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what rules govern recruitment by the Department of people appointed to run trust franchises before their contract has expired. [153272]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* All external recruitment into the Department is governed by the provisions of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code.

NHS Waste Site Thefts

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on thefts of *(a)* controlled drugs and *(b)* time-expired pharmaceuticals from sites disposing of NHS waste. [150441]

Mr. Hutton: Controlled drugs or pharmaceuticals for disposal are defined as special waste and must only be disposed of at waste disposal sites licensed by the Environment Agency (EA) to dispose of special waste. The national health service is required to complete consignment notes as part of the waste disposal audit procedure required by the EA. Although there is an expectation that the NHS will undertake periodic checks to ensure that this waste is properly disposed of, the prime responsibility for guarding against thefts at the waste disposal sites rests with the waste disposal contractor.

NICE

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland about the extension of National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines to Northern Ireland; what criteria are involved in deciding whether a guideline will be extended; and if he will make a statement. [152258]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Officials in the Department have had preliminary discussions with their Northern Ireland counterparts about the development of links between the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and Northern Ireland. No conclusions have yet been reached.

NICE guidance is freely available on its website and can be adopted by any Government or health service that wishes to do so.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will establish a dedicated investigation into the implementation by NHS trusts of National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance. [153220]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have no plans to establish such an investigation. The National Cancer Director is currently reviewing the uptake of cancer drugs approved by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). The Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection (CHAI) will inspect against healthcare standards, which are currently under development and these are likely to require National Health Service treatment and care to be based upon nationally agreed best practice and guidance, including that issued by NICE.

Nurses

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses working in the NHS have been recruited from developing countries under *(a)* memoranda of understanding and *(b)* bilateral agreements with other countries in each of the last five years. [150651]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The Department signed a memorandum of understanding with the Philippine Government last year. To date, the national health service has recruited 176 nurses directly through the agreement.

The Department has an agreement with the Ministry of Health in India. To date, the NHS has recruited 431 nurses directly as a result of this agreement.

We have recently signed a memorandum of understanding with South Africa to offer South African and English health care professionals the chance to go on time-limited placements to the other country.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses working within the NHS have come to the United Kingdom from developing countries in each of the last five years, broken down by country of origin. [150657]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) register all nurses who work in the United Kingdom and produce a statistical breakdown of their register. An analysis of the register can be found on the NMC website at www.nmc-uk.org.

Orlistat

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prescription items of Orlistat were dispensed in the community in England in 2003; and how many children received the drug. [152002]

Miss Melanie Johnson: From January to September 2003, 374,300 items of Orlistat were dispensed in the community in England. The number of items prescribed to children is not available. However, in 2002, out of the 541,400 items dispensed, an estimated 3,000 were for children.

Permanent Vegetative State

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many requests for withdrawal of food and fluid to patients in permanent vegetative state have been *(a)* made and *(b)* refused in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [152772]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In proceedings where a request has been made to withdraw artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH) from a patient in a permanent vegetative state (PVS), the Official Solicitor acts as a Litigation Friend of the Patient.

The Official Solicitor has been involved in a total of 36 cases in the last 10 years, in which a declaration from the court has been obtained that it is lawful for ANH to be withdrawn from a patient in PVS. The breakdown according to the year is shown in the table.

Year	*Number of declarations*
1993	1
1994	3
1995	4
1996	2
1997	3
1998	5
1999	1
2000	7
2001	3
2002	4
2003	3

There have not been any such cases which have reached the court for a decision and a declaration has not been granted.

Prescription Charges (Exemption)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria are used to determine which diseases warrant prescription charge exemption. [153226]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The list of medical conditions conferring prescription charge exemption was introduced in 1968. It was agreed in discussion with the medical profession. We have no plans to change it.

Renal Services

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will launch the modernisation programmes he announced to support the implementation and delivery of the first part of the Renal Services National Service Framework; whether the programmes will take account of the views of all stakeholders involved in the renal

field; whether his Department will be running implementation workshops for primary care trusts; and whether the programmes will be designed to help primary care trusts to meet the standards that need to be met by *(a)* 2006 and *(b)* 2014. [152965]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national service framework (NSF) for Renal Services—part one: dialysis and transplantation set out plans for five modernisation programmes:

re-designing the workforce

re-engineering elective dialysis access surgery

re-designing hospital access (patient transport)

re-designing care plans for partnership and choice

re-designing the built environment

Work is in hand to develop the programmes together with key stakeholders.

Expressions of interest are presently being sought from renal units, with the support of their strategic health authorities, to establish two pilot sites to develop effective workforce models for renal services, focusing particularly on elective dialysis access surgery.

Pilot sites for improving patient transport services for people needing haemodialysis treatment will be sought later this year. This programme will complement other work to develop a framework of eligibility criteria for all people who use patient transport services.

A patient conference on care plans and choice was held in December 2003 and the outputs from that are informing the next stage of this programme.

A new Health Building Note on satellite dialysis units was published on 14 January and further guidance on main renal units and transplant centres will follow later this year.

We have announced that a renal advisory group is being set up ensure that part two of the NSF is prepared with implementation in mind, and to provide national advice to support the pilot programmes, which will be key to implementation of part one. The advisory group will be able to form a view on how local arrangements are developing and how renal networks are shaping up.

Saxon Square Health Centre (Christchurch)

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on which date the health centre at Saxon Square, Christchurch was vacated by the NHS; what steps have been taken by the NHS to dispose of the building; and how much has been spent on *(a)* security and *(b)* rates on the property since its vacation. [150535]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Efforts to dispose, by way of auction or private treaty, of this second floor leasehold accommodation continue to be hampered by the restrictive covenants contained within the lease. The health centre was vacated in 1989 and work is on-going to secure an assignee or sub tenant. Figures are available from 1999 and show that some £257 and £73,600 has been spent on security and rates respectively since that date.

Stroke Patients

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many NHS trusts have developed integrated care pathways for stroke patients; [153142]

(2) how many stroke units have speech therapists working in that unit; and what proportion of their time was spent there in the last period for which figures are available. [153143]

Dr. Ladyman: We do not routinely collect information on stroke services at the level of detail requested in these questions. The most comprehensive source of information on stroke is the National Sentinel Stroke Audit, carried out by the Royal College of Physicians. The audit was commissioned by the National Health Service in 1998 and was last updated in 2002. The results can be found at http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/pubs/strokeaudit01-02.pdf. There will be a further update of these figures later this year.

Our major vehicle for improving standards for stroke services is through the older people's national service framework (NSF) which sets specific milestones for improvement by April 2004 of stroke services in primary care trusts, specialist services and general hospitals that care for people suffering from a stroke. Our document, Improvement, Expansion and Reform, which sets for the National Health Service a Priorities and Planning Framework for 2003–6, makes clear that implementation of the older people's NSF is a top priority, and that the 2004 milestone around specialist stroke services is a key target.

Implementation of the NSF for older people is leading to real improvements in stroke services and making a difference to people's lives. The development of better services and improved standards in stroke care requires the right balance between national standards, provided by the NSF, national clinical guidelines and local control. It will be important to ensure that stroke care services are co-ordinated and fully integrated within a full range of other relevant local services.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Exports

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list *(a)* arms export licences granted and *(b)* products exported under such licences to (i) Jamaica, (ii) Morocco, (iii) Nepal, (iv) Russia and (v) Indonesia in (A) 2003 and (B) 2004; and if she will make a statement. [151907]

Nigel Griffiths: Details of all export licences are published by destination in the Government's Annual Reports on Strategic Export Controls, copies of which are available from the Libraries of the House. Details of export licences approved in 2003 will be published later this year in the 2003 Annual Report, and details for 2004, similarly in the 2004 Annual Report next year.

The Government do not keep records of exports made under these licences.

British Gas Survey

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1452, what the *(a)* name and *(b)* date of publication of the British Gas survey was. [151801]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 29 January 2004]*: The survey to which my right hon. Friend referred was the British Gas TIME 4 Survey published in December 2002.

Broadband

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* funding arrangements for and *(b)* objectives of broadband regional aggregation boards will be. [152988]

Mr. Timms: The broadband regional aggregation bodies ("RABs"), together with the national aggregation body ("NAB"), aim to provide better value for public sector customers seeking broadband connectivity and to enhance the availability of broadband (not least in remote and rural areas). The RABs and NAB will join up individual public sector broadband requirements and present them as consolidated requests to the market—delivering better value deals and driving up broadband availability by making it more attractive to telecom companies to make the capital investment necessary to provide broadband in new areas. The Government and public sector is expected to spend at least £1 billion on broadband over the next three years, and the RABs and NAB will help ensure that the most is made of this buying power. The set up costs of each RAB are being funded by a loan and/or grant made by the relevant Regional Development Agency, and thereafter the costs will be covered by an appropriate mark up within the contracts that the RAB negotiates—the aggregation of demand by a RAB providing cost savings which will cover its expenses. Any profits which might accrue to a RAB would be distributed by way of rebate to the customers.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether broadband regional aggregation boards are permitted to apply a levy on existing services included in their activities. [152989]

Mr. Timms: Broadband regional aggregation bodies ("RABs") will offer highest available value for money to public sector customers in their region and the costs will include a mark-up to cover their costs. Any public sector customer contemplating novating a contract for broadband connectivity to a RAB will need to consider whether to take the RAB's offer or stay with their existing contract if that offers better terms—no customer will be obliged to pay a levy on their existing contracts if they are not transferred to a RAB.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action the Government are taking to promote the take up of next-generation broadband networks. [153567]

Mr. Timms: At the end of 2003 there were over 3.2 million subscribers to broadband services in the UK growing at 40 000 per week. The majority of these subscribers were using services with downstream specifications of 500–600 kbps. However, most of the major providers offer broadband services for businesses and consumers at 1 or 2 Mbps and some operators offer services at even high specifications. We expect that there will be an increasing demand for higher speed services over the next few years.

The Government are committed to make use of broadband for the delivery of public services, for example the Department for Education and Skills has set a target for all primary and secondary schools in England to have broadband connections by 2006. As part of its support for businesses adopting information and information technology, the DTI has produced a wealth of material which explains the benefits of using broadband and how it can help business become more effective.

Business Start-ups

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impediments to the formation of spin-off firms from larger firms and universities; and what steps are being taken to tackle such impediments. [152053]

Ms Hewitt: The number of spin offs from UK universities has increased significantly, rising from 28 in 1995–96 to almost 250 in 2000–01. The latest Higher Education Business Interactions Survey indicates that in the academic year 2000–01 248 companies were spun out from UK universities, employing 10,710 people (an increase of 84 per cent. on the previous year) and a turnover of £195 million (an increase of 46 per cent. on 1999–2000). The Government have supported the increased levels of spin-offs by addressing the funding gap between basic university research and private sector investment, which was identified in our "Investing in Innovation" Strategy. This funding gap has been addressed through the University Challenge fund which provides seed funding for Universities to support spin-offs and has now been assimilated into Higher Education Innovation Fund round 2, which was launched in December 2003, with a deadline for bids of 25 February.

Call Centres

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of call centres from other EU countries which have been relocated abroad since 2000. [153224]

Ms Hewitt: There are no sources of data on international labour movements that would enable my Department to estimate the number of call centres which may have been relocated from other EU countries.

Computer Viruses

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated cost to United Kingdom businesses was of computer viruses in each of the last five years. [153558]

Mr. Timms: The information is not collected in this way. The DTI works with business to produce a biennial survey of Information Security Breaches. The Survey is intended to raise awareness of the importance

of effective information security management. The Surveys do not set out to survey or measure the average costs of internet security breaches, such as virus attacks, but survey the costs of all information security breaches. Based on the information gathered for the 2002 Survey, the figures indicated that serious security incidents cost on average some £30,000 per incident in 2001.

Work on the 2004 Information Security Breaches Survey is almost complete and the results will be announced at the Infosecurity Europe exhibition on 27 April. I expect the Survey to present some up to date information on the operational impact of virus attacks.

Departmental Budget

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total budget of her Department was in each year since 1992, broken down by department. [148170]

Ms Hewitt: The total planned annual budgets for the Department are shown in the Departmental Report and also in the Main Estimates booklet issued by the Treasury at the start of each financial year. The Departmental Report 2003 (Cm 5916) was presented to Parliament in May 2003.

Final budgets for each year would have been shown in the Spring Supplementary Estimates for each year, and, for comparison purposes, in the Main Estimates booklet for the following year.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many officials in her Department had responsibility for *(a)* science, *(b)* innovation, *(c)* enterprise and *(d)* competition for each year between 1997 and 2007 (i) in real terms and (ii) as a proportion of the overall number of officials in the Department; and if she will make a statement. [153540]

Ms Hewitt: We are unable to provide this information broken down in this way for 1997–2004 without incurring disproportionate cost.

Business Relocations

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the number of jobs which may be lost in the United Kingdom over the next five years as the result of the decisions made by British companies to relocate parts of their businesses to other countries. [146127]

Ms Hewitt: We are currently studying a number of reports containing a variety of estimates, as well as submissions in response to the DTI consultation paper published in December 2003. Offshoring is not, however, a zero sum game and it will be important to consider not just the number of potential jobs that may be lost, but also the number that may be gained.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with representatives of FTSE-100 companies about decisions to relocate part of their businesses to other countries; and if she will publish the minutes of such discussions. [146128]

Ms Hewitt: On Monday 2 February I hosted a round table discussion with around 50 companies, trade unions and other organisations and academics on the issue of offshoring of UK service activity to other countries. The discussions were held under Chatham House rules, so there were no minutes. There was agreement that the UK cannot compete on labour costs, but must focus on value-added elements where the UK can compete, such as quality of service, proximity to customers, local knowledge and higher skilled work. All agreed that protectionism is not the answer, that location decisions are matters for companies, but that full account needs to be taken of all factors before decisions are made. There was also widespread recognition of the need to make the UK as competitive as possible, both for indigenous firms and to continue to attract inward investment.

Energy Policy

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect of ghost capacity in the importation of gas and electricity. [R] [147517]

Mr. Timms: I understand that my hon. Friend is referring to electricity interconnection with France.

According to the January 2004 update to national grid's "Seven Year Statement", the England and Wales plant margin (i.e. the excess of total generating capacity over winter peak demand) in 2003–04 is 21.6 per cent. This figure includes the 2GW Anglo-French electricity interconnector out of a total generating capacity of around 68GW.

The 2004–05 and 2005–06 plant margins in England and Wales are currently projected to be 22.7 per cent. and 22.3 per cent. respectively. Under these circumstances, the French interconnector would account for a lower share of the plant margin than at present.

The interconnector therefore makes a significant contribution to total generating capacity in England and Wales at times of winter peak demand.

EU Quick Start Programme

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action the UK is taking to comply with EU Quick Start programme objectives in broadband networks. [151496]

Mr. Timms: The Government believe that the Quick Start initiative is a sensible way for the community to proceed with aspects of Lisbon agenda. The Government have written to interested parties in the UK to canvass interest in the suggested broadband projects and awaits responses with interest.

Gas/Electricity Market

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how electricity prices have changed for *(a)* industrial and commercial users and *(b)* domestic users since the introduction of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements. [153319]

Mr. Timms: The following table sets out the changes in electricity prices since the introduction of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements.

Percentage

	Real terms	*Current terms*
Domestic	-9.5	+2.1
Industrial	-14.3 (-7.3 including CCL)	-7.8 (-0.3 including CCL)

Notes:
1. The percentage change is for the period Q1 2001 to Q3 2003, which are the latest data available.
2. Prices for commercial users are not available.
3. 'Real Terms' means that the effect of inflation has been removed by using the GDP deflator, an inflationary indicator for the whole economy.

Source:
ONS and DTI

Industrial Injury Claims

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action is being taken against claim handling companies acting as intermediaries between solicitors and miners with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and vibration white finger who charge up to 25 per cent. of the final award. [153531]

Nigel Griffiths: With regard to the work of claim handling agents, we have included in all our publicity material, both in the national and regional press and the Department's miners newsletter, references to the fact there should be no need for any organisations processing claims to charge claimants a fee or deduct any compensation and that if any claim handling firm suggests other arrangements claimants should seek advice elsewhere.

The Department is aware of the concerns raised about the work of claim handling companies and Lord Falconer, as Constitutional Affairs Secretary, launched a wide-ranging independent review of the regulation of the legal services market in July last year. The review is due to report by the end of 2004 and a consultation document will be issued shortly.

Industrial Participation Agreements (South Africa)

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) on what date the official seconded by the British Joint Steering Committee on the Industrial Participation Agreements in South Africa was seconded to the South African Department of Trade and Industry; and on what date the secondment ends; [151391]

(2) from what Department the official seconded by the British Joint Steering Committee on the Industrial Participation Agreements in South Africa came to the South African Department of Trade and Industry. [151392]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

In accordance with an undertaking given by the Prime Minister to President Mbeki, the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence seconded an official to the South African Department of Trade and Industry in March 2000 in the role of Offset Adviser. The secondment ended in April 2002. Since that time the UK MOD has supported a part-time Offset Adviser with commercial experience, in accordance with the wishes of the South African Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will place a copy of the reports made by the official seconded by the British Joint Steering Committee on the Industrial Participation Agreements in South Africa in the Library; [151393]

(2) how many reports on the progress of the South African industrial participation agreements have been received by the Joint Steering Committee on the Industrial Participation Agreements in South Africa since January 2000. [151394]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply

The Joint Industrial Participation Monitoring Committee has received reports from the South African Department of Trade and Industry, from Armscor and from the Industrial Participation obligors at each of its meetings. These reports have covered both the National Industrial Participation and Defence Industrial Participation programmes. No formal reports were made by the official.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what dates the Joint Steering Committee on the Industrial Participation Agreements in South Africa has met since January 2000. [151395]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

The Joint Industrial Participation Monitoring Committee has met on the following dates since January 2000:

16 November 2000
10 May 2001
8 November 2001
7 May 2002
26 November 2002
11 March 2003
1 October 2003

Information Technology

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what specific initiatives her Department is sponsoring to promote effective use of information and communication technology. [153570]

Mr. Timms: In recent years, DTI has been promoting the effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) through the UK online for business programme.

Specific initiatives under this programme include:

a national network of e-business advisers, located in the Business Links

production of a wide range of impartial, jargon-free information available on- and off-line

a comprehensive website, offering advice and examples of best practice

As a result of a decision to restructure business support within DTI, the activities of UK online for business will increasingly be integrated into the wider interests of the Department and the Business Link

Organisation. The decision to restructure has been a direct response to feedback from stakeholders and the aim will be to rationalise the wide range of schemes run by the Department into a small number of coherent and focused products.

The strategy for DTI, in partnership with industry, will be to underline the business benefits that can be achieved through more effective, sophisticated use of ICT. Businesses need to become better users of the technologies, addressing issues relating to people and processes as well as the technology itself.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what initiatives her Department is sponsoring to encourage internet connections among micro and small businesses. [153571]

Mr. Timms: Recent evidence shows, particularly in the DTI's International Benchmarking Study 2003, that there has now been an end to the "dash for access". Broadly speaking, businesses that want internet connection have got it and the dynamics are now around speed and type of access. The key issue for business is how it can unlock real value from the smarter deployment of ICT.

As there is still scope for greater numbers of micro and small businesses to become connected to the internet, DTI will continue to promote internet connection as part of the support and advice it gives to SMEs. However, the main focus will be to encourage a more effective, integrated use of ICT so that businesses can exploit the technology fully and gain the full set of benefits that it can bring.

A copy of the International Benchmarking Study 2003: Business in the Information Age is available in the Libraries of the House—URN 03/147.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her budget in 2003–04 is for the promotion of internet use among micro and small businesses. [153573]

Mr. Timms: The expenditure for 2003–04 for the UK online for business programme, which promotes internet and ICT use by SMEs, is forecast to be £7 million.

Mobile Phones (Data Protection)

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received from mobile phone users on the privacy of the data on them stored by network operators. [153623]

Mr. Timms: We have received no representations from individual users.

However, in 2003 a consultation was held on the implementation of the EC Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive. This consultation included the question: "How should service providers gain consent to processing of traffic and location data and what information should they provide?"

A number of interested groups responded on this issue and their views were taken into account in the final version. These comments are available via the DTI website along with a copy of the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003.

Post Office Closures

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what powers she has to delay the proposed closure of a post office. [153027]

Mr. Timms: None. Decisions on post office closures and relocations are an operational matter for the company. It would be inappropriate for the Government to intervene in determining individual closures. That has been the policy of successive Governments since 1969 when the Post Office was established as a statutory public corporation.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recourse is available to users where the Post Office has acted improperly in a proposed closure. [153030]

Mr. Timms: Decisions on post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. Every proposal that the company makes for the permanent closure of a post office branch is subject to public consultation in accordance with the Code of Practice on Post Office Closures and Relocations—agreed between Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch, the consumer watchdog for postal services. Postwatch are consulted on every post office closure proposal before a decision is made and there is every opportunity for those affected by a proposal, and the local MP, to make representations to the company or to Postwatch.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Post Office closures there have been in each Northern Ireland constituency in each year since 1997. [150672]

Mr. Timms: The Department does not hold such data and this is a matter that falls within the day-to-day responsibility of Post Office Ltd. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Post Offices (Stores)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which *(a)* convenience store companies and *(b)* supermarket chains have post office branches located in their stores; how many branches each organisation had located in its stores in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement on the continued availability of such branches in convenience stores. [152745]

Mr. Timms: We do not collect the information requested, which is an operational matter for the Post Office. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Printer Cartridge Remanufacturing Industry

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures the Government have put in place to ensure the future of the printer cartridge remanufacturing industry. [153195]

Mr. Timms: The Government welcomes the positive contribution of the cartridge refill sector, but do not have any financial support mechanisms specifically aimed at it.

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which Ministers in her Department have met *(a)* Lexmark and *(b)* Hewlett Packard to discuss the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive; and on what dates. [153197]

Mr. Timms: I have not met representatives of Lexmark, but met with Hewlett Packard representatives on 18 December 2003.

Private Non-financial Corporations

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the percentage net rate of return of private non-financial corporations was for *(a)* manufacturing and *(b)* services for each year between 1993 and 2003. [153554]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 9 February 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the profitability of UK manufacturing and service companies, in each year since 1993.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) First Release "Profitability of UK companies" shows the annual profitability of manufacturing companies since 1970 and service companies since 1989. Data for 2003 will be published on 31st March. This First Release, giving data up to 2002 is available free of charge from the National Statistics Website and is available in the House of Commons Library. The web address of the latest edition is: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/profit0104.pdf

Public Bodies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the total expenditure limit for *(a)* BTI, *(b)* the Office of Fair Trading, *(c)* OFTEL, *(d)* OFGEM, *(e)* Postcomm and *(f)* the Export Credit Guarantee Department for each year between 1997 and 2007. [151831]

Ms Hewitt: This information is set out in "Central Government Supply Estimates 2003–04 Supplementary Budgetary Information" (Cm 5797, May 2003). Figures are available from 1998–99 (the first year for which resource information was produced) to 2005–06 (the final year of the current Spending Review period). The title of BTI was changed in the Winter Supplementary 2003–94 to UK Trade and Investment, and from the Spring Supplementary 2003–04 the activities previously carried out by OFTEL have transferred to OFCOM (Office of Communications), a public corporation.

Radioactive Waste Consultation Paper

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reason no hard copy of the consultation paper on proposals for intermediate level radioactive waste substitution had reached either the Vote Office or the Library four days after its official release. [153234]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* A copy of the consultation document was sent to all MPs on 30 January 2004. Due to an administrative oversight, there was a short delay before copies were placed in the Libraries of the House and the Vote Office.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list those persons and organisations who have been sent copies of the consultation paper on intermediate level radioactive waste substitution. [153235]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* Around 1,600 copies of the report have been distributed to among others MPs, MEPs, the nuclear industry, local authorities and environmental groups.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she had been informed of the financial arrangements between BNFL and NAC International when she commissioned from the latter the consultation paper on proposals for intermediate level radioactive waste substitution. [153236]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* The Department was aware of the financial arrangements between BNFL and NAC International when NAC were commissioned to undertake the report.

NAC International were chosen following a competitive tendering process in line with Departmental rules.

NAC is an international company providing consultancy services on a wide range of nuclear issues. We are advised by NAC that its work for BNFL amounts to around 0.3 per cent. of current turnover. Most of NAC's turnover is generated from work conducted outside the UK.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 375W, on Regional Development Agencies, how many jobs were created in each region as a result of foreign direct investment. [153513]

Jacqui Smith: The following information is taken from the UK Trade and Investment database, January 2004. The figures are collected on the basis of information provided by companies at the time of the announcement of the decision to invest, and some of these decisions are not notified to UK Trade and Investment until long after a decision is taken. There is no requirement on companies to notify inward investment decisions to UK Trade and Investment and so the figures include only those projects where UK Trade and Investment or its regional partners were involved or which have come to their notice. They are therefore likely to be an under-estimate. As well as jobs created, jobs may also be safeguarded as a result of foreign direct investment. These are not included in the following table.

RDA	*Number of jobs created as a result of foreign direct investment decisions announced during FY 2002–03*
Advantage West Midlands	197
East of England Development Agency[1]	450
East Midlands Development Agency	1,248
London Development Agency[2]	1,511
Northwest Development Agency	5,925
One North East	703
South East of England Development Agency	443
South West Regional Development Agency	499
Yorkshire Forward	405

[1] East of England Development Agency does not handle inward investment directly but through a sister organisation, Invest East of England.

[2] Inward investment promotion and case handling of potential inward investors is handled by London First Centre under contract to London Development Agency. Aftercare of existing inward investors is carried out by London Development Agency, working with its sub-regional partners.

Research Funding Gap

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to address the funding gap between public sector support for research and private sector investment in development. [152052]

Ms Hewitt: By 2005–06 the science budget will reach just short of £3 billion, more than double the figure for 1997–8. Moreover, the Chancellor announced in his speech on 26 January that we will make a long term plan for science funding over the next decade a central feature of our 2004 spending review. These demonstrate the Government's strong commitment to an excellent science base.

We are pressing forward on a number of fronts to address the funding gap between research and commercial exploitation. Direct support to universities and public sector research establishments (PSREs) is being provided in the form of proof of concept and seed corn funding through programmes such as University Challenge, the second round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) and the Public Sector Research Exploitation fund. In addition the Government is building up the capability of the research community to interact with business and investors. The recent Lambert Review of business /HEI interaction found that this investment is already succeeding.

R&D tax credits provide an incentive for companies to undertake R&D, both when work is subcontracted to higher education institutions or public sector research bodies and when work is done by the company itself.

The Government's Innovation Report (published in December 2003), describes how the DTI will develop a Technology Strategy with business, the SET base, other Government Departments, RDAs, and other stakeholders to identify key technologies with future growth potential. DTI will provide some of the funding and share some of the risks of pulling through technologies in these key areas into the market. In addition, the Research Councils will make plans for increasing the rate of knowledge transfer and interaction with business.

Science and Society Directorate

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 646W, on the Science and Society Directorate, if she will make a statement on the Government's strategy for supporting science that is of social rather than economic benefit; and what the role of the Science and Society Directorate is in promoting the value of science that is without economic benefit. [151088]

Ms Hewitt: In the context of the work of the Science and Society Directorate, 'science' includes engineering, technology, medicine, mathematics and the natural and social sciences all of which have social and economic benefit. Working with and through others the Directorate aims to support activities which address all of these areas such as National Science Week.

The Government are also supporting social research directly through the Economic and Social Research Council.

Ensuring that all of these areas are properly addressed is a key consideration when we allocate resources to the science base.

Skills Shortages

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment she has made of skills shortages in the United Kingdom. [153568]

Ms Hewitt: Last week I jointly launched the National Employer Skills Survey 2003 which was the largest survey of its kind ever commissioned. A total of 72,100 interviews were conducted with employees from 27 industries. This survey provides robust and detailed statistical information about the extent, causes and implications of England's recruitment problems and skill shortages.

NESS suggested that at any one time there are 250,000 job vacancies that are hard to fill and of these 135,000 cannot be filled because of skill shortages. The skilled trades are hardest hit by skill shortages and represent 18 per cent. of the hard to fill vacancies due to skill shortages.

Skills gaps among those in the workforce are more acute with employers stating that almost 2½ million employees (11 per cent. of the total English workforce) are lacking skills needed to do their job effectively.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her policy on the use of sunset clauses in legislation; and which Acts containing such clauses relevant to her Department were passed in each year since 1997. [149334]

Ms Hewitt: I refer my hon. Friend to the replies that I gave to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 24 April 2003, *Official Report*, columns 110–11W, and the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) on 1 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 217W.

Trade and Investment White Paper

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to publish a White Paper on trade and investment in 2004. [153544]

Ms Hewitt: I plan to publish a White Paper on trade and investment later this year.

The document will set out the Government's policies relating to trade, investment and improving productivity in response to the opportunities and challenges of globalisation both for the UK economy and more widely, especially for developing countries.

UK Company Profitability

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the profitability of UK companies has been, broken down by sector, in each quarter since 1997. [148179]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 9 February 2004:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the profitability of UK companies, broken down by sector, in each quarter since 1997. (148179)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) First Release "Profitability of UK companies" shows the quarterly profitability of private non-financial companies since 1989. It also shows the breakdown into manufacturing companies, service sector companies and oil extraction companies. This First Release is available free of charge from the National Statistics Website and is available in the House of Commons Library. The web address of the latest edition is http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/profit0104.pdf

The ONS do not publish estimates of profitability for financial companies or for public corporations. A further breakdown of sectoral detail for private non-financial corporations is not available.

UK Productivity

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the productivity of UK companies has been, broken down by sector, in each quarter since 1997. [148176]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 9 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the productivity of UK companies in each quarter since 1997. (148176)

The attached table shows the level of productivity, as measured by output per job, for the whole economy and for the energy, manufacturing and services sectors. The services sector figures are published as experimental statistics on the National Statistics website. All series shown are output per job indices which are referenced to 100 for the annual average of the year 2000. The data shown are from the first quarter of 1997 to the first quarter of 2003 inclusive.

Indices[1] of output per job for the whole UK economy and for three sectors, quarterly since 1997

		Sector		
Period	*Whole economy*	*Mining, Electricity, Gas and Water Supply*	*Manufacturing*	*Services*
1997 Q1	94.3	88.4	89.9	94.6
1997 Q2	94.0	88.2	89.2	94.3
1997 Q3	94.6	88.3	90.0	95.1
1997 Q4	95.4	86.5	90.2	96.4
1998 Q1	95.7	86.7	90.5	96.7
1998 Q2	96.0	87.9	90.6	97.1
1998 Q3	96.9	89.9	90.9	98.3
1998 Q4	97.5	91.9	90.9	99.0
1999 Q1	97.4	93.5	92.1	98.5
1999 Q2	97.3	96.3	93.5	98.1
1999 Q3	97.6	100.0	95.3	97.8
1999 Q4	98.3	101.9	96.7	98.6
2000 Q1	99.4	103.7	97.8	99.4
2000 Q2	99.8	102.8	99.3	99.8
2000 Q3	100.3	98.7	100.5	100.5
2000 Q4	100.4	94.9	102.4	100.3
2001 Q1	101.1	95.2	103.5	100.6
2001 Q2	100.8	96.7	102.6	100.6
2001 Q3	101.0	96.2	104.0	100.7
2001 Q4	101.4	96.5	102.9	101.5
2002 Q1	101.6	97.4	103.8	101.2
2002 Q2	102.0	101.2	103.5	101.5
2002 Q3	102.8	96.5	106.0	102.4
2002 Q4	103.4	97.8	106.1	103.0
2003 Q1	103.4	96.2	107.2	103.3
2003 Q2	103.7	95.0	109.7	103.3
2003 Q3	104.3	96.6	111.1	104.2

[1] All indices referenced to 100 for the annual average of the year 2000.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the productivity of UK companies with a turnover of *(a)* less than £1 million, *(b)* £1 to £20 million, *(c)* £20 to £50 million, *(d)* £50 to £100 million and *(e)* more than £100 million has been in each quarter since 1997. [148177]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 9 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the productivity of UK companies. (148177)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) does not currently produce estimates of the productivity of UK companies by turnover size bands. Official productivity estimates are based on National Accounts output data. While it would be possible to use other data to produce measures of activity by turnover size band, such estimates would be in current prices only and would be distinct from official productivity measures. Such current price measures would not be able to be related to the official productivity measures, and could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Abandoned Cars

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of abandoned cars were set alight in the UK in each of the four years before 2001–02 for which figures are available. [153395]

Mr. Raynsford: In England, the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) conducted a Municipal Waste Management Survey in 2000–01 which estimated

that 224,000 abandoned vehicles, recorded for the first time by the survey, were removed and destroyed by local authorities.

An analysis of national fire statistics shows that in 2000–01 an estimated 15,400 fires occurred in vehicles that had previously been abandoned. This estimate represents 7 per cent. of all abandoned vehicles removed and destroyed, as recorded by the DEFRA survey.

Figures on abandoned vehicles before 2000–01 are not available.

Area-based Initiatives

Andrew George: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what progress he has made in *(a)* reducing the number of area-based initiatives, *(b)* reducing the need for repetitive strategies of area-based initiatives, *(c)* reducing the administrative burden of area-based initiatives and *(d)* improving the ease of access by (i) target groups, (ii) community organisations, (iii) business organisations and (iv) local authority organisations to area-based initiatives in each Government Department which has such initiatives; [153590]

(2) what steps his Department has taken to *(a)* reduce, *(b)* amalgamate and *(c)* devolve responsibility for area-based initiatives since the publication of the Regional Co-ordination Unit's report on area-based initiatives in October 2002. [153589]

Yvette Cooper: The Regional Co-ordination Unit (RCU) led a review of area-based initiatives (ABIs) in 2001 which included the commitment to significantly reduce the number of separate funding streams without reducing the total amount of funding. The RCU published a report in July 2003, outlining plans to reduce ABIs by almost 50 per cent. Copies of that 2003 report are available in the Library of the House.

The RCU also operates a Gateway for assessing new and developing area-based initiatives to ensure that initiatives are carefully designed to achieve their goals while taking opportunities to minimise bureaucracy, and make links to other initiatives.

Council Tax

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set a 2 per cent. cap on council tax increases for pensioners; and what he estimates the cost to his Department of subsidising a 2 per cent. cap would be. [154306]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to set a cap on council tax increases for pensioners. It is not possible to estimate how much such a subsidy would cost in the coming year as this depends on the level of council tax set by local authorities.

Council Tax Bands

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to consult interested parties on the possibility of increasing the number of council tax bands for dwellings valued up to £40,000. [153306]

Mr. Raynsford: The Local Government Act 2003 provides for a council tax revaluation in England in 2007 based on 1 April 2005 values. As the 2001 White Paper, "Strong Local Leadership, Quality Public Services" made clear, ahead of revaluation, the Government will listen to the views of local government and taxpayers about council tax bands. Decisions on any changes to the banding structure will be taken nearer to the time of the revaluation.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the width of council tax bands on residents of mobile homes. [153307]

Mr. Raynsford: The 2001 White Paper, "Strong Local Leadership, Quality Public Services", noted the concern that council tax bands were not fine grained enough to reflect difference in value at the top and the bottom of the property market and acknowledged that residents of mobile homes and other very low value property have added to calls to split band A. The Local Government Act 2003 provides for a council tax revaluation in England in 2007 based on 1 April 2005 values. The White Paper made clear that ahead of revaluation the Government will listen to the views of local government and taxpayers about council tax bands. The Balance of Funding Review has also been considering evidence on possible changes to existing bands. Decisions on any changes to the banding structure will be taken nearer to the time of the revaluation.

Decent Homes Standard

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of *(a)* council owned housing and *(b)* housing association properties in each London borough meet the Decent Homes Standard; and what estimate he has made of the cost of meeting the standard by the target date of 2010 for each borough. [153944]

Keith Hill: The proportion of local authority owned dwellings in London that are decent and their estimates of cost to make decent, as reported on the 2003 HIP Business Plan statistical appendices, are in the table as follows. Information at the borough level on housing associations is not available, but using information from the 2003 Housing Corporation Regular Statistical Return for London based Housing Associations shows that they have around 15 per cent. non-decent homes.

Decent homes standard

Authority	*Percentage of LA dwellings that are decent at 2003*	*Cost to make all dwellings decent (£000)*
Barking and Dagenham	42	[1]
Barnet	58	10,387
Brent	49	25,818
Camden	36	306,449
City of London	45	[1]
Croydon	60	54,664
Ealing	69	31,548
Enfield	69	13,047
Greenwich	18	68,477
Hackney	31	[1]
Hammersmith and Fulham	70	39,088
Haringey	42	49,486
Harrow	48	11,282
Havering	67	7,740
Hillingdon	69	18,586
Hounslow	36	39,126
Islington	36	181,900
Kensington and Chelsea	41	35,282

Decent homes standard

Authority	*Percentage of LA dwellings that are decent at 2003*	*Cost to make all dwellings decent (£000)*
Kingston upon Thames	50	[1]—
Lambeth	57	[1]—
Lewisham	39	128,414
Merton	68	7,058
Newham	51	143,239
Redbridge	74	2,800
Southwark	52	[1]—
Sutton	58	26,726
Tower Hamlets	25	202,674
Waltham Forest	11	175,890
Wandsworth	88	25,085
Westminster	32	99,774

[1] Cost not provided.
Source:
2003 BPSA

Drug Treatment Services

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning applications to local authorities for drug treatment services were *(a)* made and *(b)* approved in the last year for which figures are available. [153710]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

HMOs

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on how many occasions since 1 May 1997 *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials from (i) his Department and (ii) its predecessors have met (A) representatives of Universities UK and (B) individual vice chancellors to discuss their concerns about the mandatory houses in multiple occupation licensing scheme. [153136]

Keith Hill: I am not aware that there have been any such meetings, but I would be happy to meet with representatives of Universities UK and individual vice chancellors to address their concerns about mandatory Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place copies of the responses to Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation in England, a consultation paper, in the Library. [153137]

Keith Hill: The analysis of responses to the consultation paper on Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation in England as well as the list of respondents to the consultation is already available in the Library of the House. However, copies of the responses will also be made available in the Library.

Housing

Mr. Richard Spring: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will provide further funding for debt-free local authorities which did not receive transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant funding. [153025]

Keith Hill: Local Authority Social Housing grant was abolished from 1 April 2003 as part of the measures outlined in 'Sustainable Communities: building for the future' in order to allow a more strategic use of resources. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced additional funding for the transitional arrangements on 21 October 2003. In all £432 million has been made available to debt free local authorities and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to provide further additional transitional funding. Local authorities remain able to provide social housing through resources allocated to them and the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme provides Social Housing Grant to registered social landlords.

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions took place with representatives of housing associations in the London Borough of Wandsworth on the decision by the Housing Corporation to reduce the number of housing associations that receive development funding. [152975]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation is currently piloting a partnering programme with a number of Associations. It consulted widely on the pilot prior to its commencement. The consultation included both local authority and housing association representatives.

The eligibility criteria for the pilot were publicly available and associations were invited to bid to the Housing Corporation through the partnering route.if they could bring added value to the development programme.

The scheme is a pilot and other Associations are still able to bid through the traditional route, and will be funded if projects meet national and regional housing strategy objectives, represent value for money and are deliverable, subject to available funding.

The outcome of the pilot might reduce the number of associations developing, however there have been no specific discussions about reducing the number and there have been no decisions made on the future number of developing associations.

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many housing associations within the Greater London area will cease to receive development funding from the Housing Corporation in 2004. [152976]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation, in conjunction with Regional Housing Boards including London, are still assessing and considering the bids received for funding through the approved development programme (ADP) for 2004–05 and 2005–06. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not yet taken decisions on which bids to approve.

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many properties have been provided in *(a)* the Greater London area and *(b)* the London Borough of Wandsworth in each of the last five years by the Housing Corporation in its London approved development programme. [152977]

Keith Hill: The number of homes provided in the London region and the London Borough of Wandsworth in each of the last five years through funding via the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme is shown in the following table.

	London (a)	*Wandsworth (b)*
1998–99	8,518	271
1999–2000	6,675	210
2000–01	6,700	140
2001–02	6,289	130
2002–03	5,501	116
Total	33,683	867

Source:
Housing Corporation Outturn statements

Local Authority Grants

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what relationship his Department has found between the change in central government grants that local authorities have received in 2003–04 and the changes in council tax that they have implemented. [153304]

Mr. Raynsford: General grants (Revenue Support Grant, Non-Domestic Rates and Principal Formula Police Grant) increased by 5.9 per cent. on a like for like basis between 2002–03 and 2003–04. In the same period the average Band D area council tax increased by 12.9 per cent. Data for individual authorities can be found at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0304/changess.xls for grants and at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/ctax/ctax034.htm. for council tax.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to amend safety limits on mobile phone masts to take account of recent UK and European research. [153232]

Keith Hill: The Government does not have any plans to amend the radio frequency public exposure guidelines. Our advice is based on the Stewart Report on health effects of mobile phones and base stations, which recommended a precautionary approach to the development of mobile phone technology. The Government accepted the precautionary approach and has therefore introduced measures to ensure that people's exposures from base stations meet the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). These guidelines are five times tougher than they had been for the public.

On 14 January the National Radiological Protection Board's independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation published a report entitled "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields". The Advisory Group reviewed the evidence for health effects from radiofrequency transmissions, especially that published since the Stewart Report on Mobile Phones and Health in 2000. Their report confirmed that "Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health." However, the Advisory Group also concluded that continued research is needed.

The Government is keeping the whole area of mobile phone technologies under review in the light of further research.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will give local authorities powers to determine the suitability of sites for mobile telephone transmitters. [153810]

Keith Hill: Local planning authorities already have powers to determine the suitability of sites for mobile phone base stations. Current planning guidance on telecommunications is set out in the revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 8: Telecommunications.

The installation of any telecommunications mast in designated area such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, conservation areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and of a mast of more than 15 metres in height elsewhere, is subject to a full planning application. Certain types of development, such as the installation of ground-based masts of up to 15 metres in height, are subject to a prior approval procedure. Prior approval procedures allow the local planning authority the opportunity to say whether it wishes to approve details of the siting and appearance of the installation. If the authority considers that the development will pose a serious threat to amenity, it is able to refuse approval.

The Government also strongly encourages telecommunications operators and local planning authorities to carry out annual discussions about rollout plans for each authority's area. Pre-application discussions on a specific development proposal should be set in the context of the operator's strategy for telecommunications development in the area.

Planning Permission (Windows)

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to require planning permission for reinstatement of windows which overlook other premises. [153741]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to require planning permission for the reinstatement of windows. There is a right to install or replace windows in dwellinghouses without needing to apply for planning permission; this has relieved local councils of a potentially large administrative burden. However, where development requires specific planning permission, Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 says that it might be material to consider the question of 'overlooking' or loss of privacy experienced by a particular resident.

Public Sector Leasehold

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the development of a code of good practice for public sector residential leasehold management. [152294]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no current plans to develop a code of good practice for public sector residential leasehold management.

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will consult on the accounting requirement provisions contained in the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002. [152295]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to consult on regulations relating to the accounting provisions set out in sections 152 and 156 of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 in April 2004.

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how often the Public Sector Leasehold Working Party has met; when it last met; and when he expects it to meet again. [152296]

Keith Hill: The Public Sector Leasehold Working Party first met in February 2002. Since then six meetings have been held, the last of which was on 16 May 2003. Dates for future meetings have not been decided.

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the terms of reference of the Public Sector Leasehold Working Party are; to whom it reports; and if he will make a statement. [152297]

Keith Hill: The terms of reference for the public sector leasehold working party are:

1. To identify and review problems faced by social sector leaseholders in relation to the repair or renovation of Local Authority and RSL stock; in particular, any arising from:

(a) the practical application of forthcoming amendments to Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (to be made by the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill, when enacted) in relation to costs incurred under long term agreements;

(b) the framing of regulations under the proposed subsections 7, 8, 9 and 10 and the financial limits to be applied;

(c) the extent to which leaseholders are required to meet the cost of such works; with particular reference to long standing dilapidation, improvements, grounds and roads and utility services;

(d) the effect of existing measures to minimise the cost to leaseholders, including the capping of service charges;

(e) any differences in treatment between different schemes and the rationale for such differences;

(f) social landlord accounting practices, service charge statements and the maintenance and auditing of Housing Revenue Accounts and analogous funds;

(g) differences in services supplied by private sector and social landlords, and the services for which public sector leaseholders should reasonably be expected to pay;

(h) the particular problems of managing social housing stock with minority leaseholder tenure and consider possible solutions.

2. To consider possible changes to address issues identified under 1. above.

The Working Party reports ultimately to me through the Head of Housing Private Sector Division.

Retail Premises (Mezzanine Floors)

Mr. Willis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to require a full planning application for the approval of mezzanine retail floor space within existing retail premises; and if he will make a statement. [153837]

Keith Hill: Section 55(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 excludes from the definition of development works which do not affect the external appearance of a building. As a result, unless the planning permission has a condition specifying the maximum floor space permitted or expressly excludes the provision of a mezzanine floor, or the development is an intensification in the use amounting to a material change in the use, the planning system has no control over such proposals.

As part of the debates in Committee on the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, an amendment has been proposed to change section 55(2) to bring such developments within planning control. Ministers have indicated that they take this issue seriously and will consider it further before the next stage of the Bill.

Thames Gateway (Housing)

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the transport infrastructure projects which are required in order to facilitate the provision of 120,000 additional homes in the Thames Gateway in such a way as is consistent with the concept of sustainable communities; and which of those projects has received the Government's commitment that the necessary public funding will be made available. [153492]

Keith Hill: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced on 30 July 2003 that the Government would commit support that would enable the development of at least 120,000 homes in the Thames Gateway by 2016. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be supporting development across the Gateway, with particular focus on five strategic locations; East London Gateway, Greenwich Peninsula to Woolwich, Barking Reach, Thurrock and Ebbsfleet/ North Kent Thameside.

In his statement, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister identified the transport infrastructure projects that are critical to supporting growth. These include domestic services on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, extensions to the Docklands Light Rail (DLR) network and bus transit systems for East and South East London and Kent Thameside.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has approved a consultation exercise by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) on a proposed Integrated Kent Franchise that incorporates CTRL Domestic Services. The Government have asked Kent County Council to develop their proposals for Kent Fastrack Phase 2 and made a provisional offer of up to £200 million PFI credits to support the Thames Gateway Bridge . The Mayor has announced that he is committed to taking forward the highlighted London schemes, however this remains subject to planning and funding.

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the 120,000 new homes envisaged for the Thames Gateway he estimates will not be deliverable without a major enhancement of flood defences; to what extent further development in the Thames Gateway may be prevented without major enhancement of flood defences; and when the Government expects to *(a)* agree and *(b)* begin to implement a programme of major enhancement of flood defences in the Thames Gateway. [153511]

Keith Hill: Growth in the Thames Gateway will be largely concentrated on previously developed land in existing urban areas. Concentration of the development on priority areas substantially reduces the requirement for extra flood defences since most of the Thames

Estuary is already protected to a greater than 1:1000 year level (possibility of 0.1 per cent. of flooding in any one year) until 2030. This includes a generous allowance for future sea level rise until 2030 and is a far higher standard of protection than in most other parts of the UK.

There are some parts of the Gateway that do not benefit from defences to this standard, notably the Medway Estuary. However, where development is proposed in such areas, we will ensure that appropriate defence measures are put in place to provide flood risk protection standards as required by Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 on 'Development and Flood Risk'. We shall also seek to ensure that the appropriate design and siting of development is considered through an assessment of flood risk that is required for all Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funded development in the Gateway.

The Environment Agency is currently conducting a major study, entitled 'Thames Estuary 2100', of flood risk management for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It is expected that this will take approximately six years to report, and that proposals for the renewal and possible enhancement of flood defences in the Thames Gateway will be implemented between 2015 and 2035. Much of this improvement would have been required even if no extra housing had been envisaged.

Wind Farms

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes he is making to planning guidance with regard to applications to build wind farms; and if he will make a statement. [153368]

Keith Hill: The Government's proposals for the handling of all types of renewable energy projects through the planning system were set out in draft Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22) published for public consultation on 5 November 2003. Copies are available in the Libraries of the House. The consultation period ended on 30 January. The final version of PPS22 will not be published until careful consideration has been given to all the consultation responses received.

TRANSPORT

Air Traffic Control (Heathrow)

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to conduct research into air traffic control delays at Heathrow airport. [152985]

Mr. McNulty: This is a matter for BAA, as airport operator, and National Air Traffic Services (NATS), as the BAA's contracted supplier of airport air traffic control services.

Airline Safety

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what action the Civil Aviation Authority intends to take about official under-reporting of oil fume exposures by aircrews; [153410]

(2) what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the Civil Aviation Authority has details of all *(a)* defect reports, *(b)* air safety reports and *(c)* mandatory occurrence reporting reports during 2003 regarding fume, smoke or oil leak incidents relating to the (i) BAE 146 and (ii) Boeing 757 aircraft. [153414]

Mr. McNulty: The CAA receives over 9,000 mandatory occurrence reports each year and is not aware of any under reporting of oil fume exposures by aircrew.

The current statutory framework ensures that the Civil Aviation Authority receives the data it requires on incidents that can affect flight safety. The Air Navigation (General) Regulations 1993 prescribe the mandatory reporting to the Authority of any hazardous, or potentially hazardous, defects encountered during aircraft operations or maintenance. Specifically Article 17*(c)* requires the reporting of any occurrence involving the impairment during a flight of the capacity of a member of the flight crew to undertake properly his or her functions. In addition, the Civil Air Publication CAP 382 "Mandatory Occurrence Scheme" gives detailed information and guidance that backs up the Air Navigation (General) Regulations 1993. Appendix B of CAP 382 includes a requirement to report each occurrence of smoke or noxious fumes in the aircraft that resulted in the use of emergency equipment or procedures.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Civil Aviation Authority have taken to ensure that (i) aircrews and (ii) passengers are fully aware of the need to seek appropriate medical advice and assistance to avoid long term ill health following cabin fume incidents. [153411]

Mr. McNulty: The House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology's report on Air Travel and Health, November 2000, looked into the health aspects of air travel including cabin air quality. Several studies on cabin air have been carried out but have revealed no evidence that fumes would be a hazard to the long-term health of passengers. The Civil Aviation Authority is not aware of any adverse long-term health effects in flight crew that can be traced back to the cabin environment.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research the Civil Aviation Authority has undertaken on the chronic low dose effects of repeat inhalation by aircrews of organophosphates and other substances leaking from engine oil into aircraft air supplies. [153413]

Mr. McNulty: The Civil Aviation Authority has recently investigated cabin air contaminants after a small number of events where flight crew reported the presence of fumes in the cockpit. Other, more broadly-based, international research into aircraft cabin air quality has not shown the presence of organophosphates or any other dangerous engine oil-related substances leaking into the cabin air system on a regular, repeated or continuous basis.

Crew Relief Costs Scheme

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department will revise the Crew Relief Costs scheme eligibility criteria to align them with

shipping policy objectives to support the UK register and British seafarers employed in the short-sea sector as set out in the shipping strategy paper, "British Shipping: Charting a New Course", published in December 1998. [152951]

Mr. Jamieson: Revision of the eligibility criteria for the Crew Relief Costs scheme requires primary legislation. It will be implemented when parliamentary time is available.

Freight Facilities Grant

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Government plan to extend the Freight Facilities Grant scheme to include coastal and short-sea shipping. [152950]

Mr. Jamieson: The scheme already covers coastal and short-sea shipping.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to promote the exclusion from congestion charging schemes of liquefied petroleum gas powered road vehicles. [153729]

Mr. Jamieson: We plan to consult on local congestion charging guidance later this year. This will cover the scope for exemptions and concessions at both a national and local authority level, reflecting experience gained in London and Durham.

Number Plate Fraud

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many drivers were victims of number plate fraud, and as a result had to re-register their vehicle, in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [153218]

Mr. Jamieson: DVLA issues vehicles with replacement registration numbers for a variety of reasons. No separate figures are available for those replaced as a result of number plate fraud, but it is estimated that the problem is not widespread and that numbers are extremely low.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress the Government are making in combating vehicle number plate fraud. [153219]

Mr. Jamieson: New measures have been introduced to prevent people from obtaining number plates to which they are not entitled. Since 1 January 2004, all suppliers of number plates have been required to register with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and to keep records of sales. Purchasers are required to produce evidence of their identity as well as the vehicle registration document or suitable alternative.

We are now working on measures to make number plates more secure and to ensure that they can be clearly and visibly linked to the vehicle on which they are displayed. A consultation paper on number plate security was issued in 2003 and in the light of comments received from the industry, the police and the general public, a shortlist of proposals is being drawn up for further action.

Pensioner Transport Concessions

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many pensioners benefit from free travel on public transport; [153501]

(2) how many pensioners are not entitled to free travel on public transport. [153502]

Mr. McNulty: In England, there are six areas where pensioners (men aged 65 and over, women aged 60 and over) are offered free concessionary travel on local bus services. These are the London boroughs, Merseyside, West Midlands, Crawley, Reading and Redditch. We estimate that 1.8 million pensioners are eligible for free bus travel in these areas. The remaining 7.3 million pensioners in England are entitled to at least the statutory half-fare minimum requirement on bus services, though local authorities can offer more generous schemes and many provide concessions between half fares and free travel, such as flat fares. Some authorities offer the choice of free travel with a charge for the annual concessionary travel pass as an alternative to the statutory minimum half fare with a free annual pass. Some local authorities offer free travel to older age groups, for example, those aged 75 and over. Some local authorities also extend their concessionary fare schemes to cover other forms of public transport—including the free schemes in the London boroughs, Merseyside, West Midlands and Crawley.

From 1 April 2003, concessionary fares became available to men aged 60 to 64, bringing them into line with women of the same age. This includes 230,000 men who live in the six free travel areas, though West Midlands PTA is now providing half fares to men and women who reach their 60th birthday on or after 1 April 2003, who will not receive free fares until they are 65. A further 940,000 men live in other areas where at least half fares or better, are available.

Figures are based on Office for National Statistics 2002 population estimates.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to stop the system of public transport concessions for pensioners being based on postcode. [153621]

Mr. McNulty: We do not intend to change the current arrangements for providing local authority concessionary travel for pensioners. The statutory requirement for concessionary fares ensures an equitable minimum level of half-fares on local buses, with a free pass for all pensioners in England. This minimum requirement was introduced in 2001 and has benefited many people where previously there was no scheme at all, or a scheme that offered less than half-fares. Above the minimum requirement, it remains for local authorities to make more generous provision, at their discretion and in the light of their own financial priorities and local circumstances.

From 1 April 2003 men aged 60 and over have benefited from existing schemes in their area.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will estimate the cost of providing free off-peak travel for pensioners. [151637]

Mr. McNulty *[pursuant to his reply, 29 January 2004, Official Report, c. 468W]:* We have made no estimate of the total cost of providing free off-peak travel for pensioners on all forms of public transport. However, we estimate that the additional cost of providing free travel on all local bus services for pensioners would be more than £300 million per year. This does not include the costs of free travel on other forms of public transport. Local authorities in England currently spend around £500 million per year on concessionary travel for all men and women aged 60 and over, disabled people and in some areas, children, on all forms of public transport including, as well as buses, London Underground, other metro and tram systems, some national rail services and ferries.

Railways

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the average number of miles to major overhaul was for each category of train rolling stock in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2002; [153115]

(2) what steps he is taking to satisfy himself that train rolling stock is receiving timely and appropriate heavy preventive maintenance and major overhaul. [153119]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not available in the form requested because maintenance regimes are complex and specific to individual types of rolling stock. All, however, are agreed between the manufacturer, the rolling stock leasing company and the train operating company, must meet Railway Group Standards and must ensure the level of reliability necessary to provide the service required by the franchise agreement with the Strategic Rail Authority.

Lawrie Quinn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the role of independent economic regulation in the rail industry. [154173]

Mr. Darling: The railway is and will continue to be a public-private sector partnership. The Government attaches considerable importance to investor confidence and the need to preserve and protect the rights of private sector investors and lenders and their ability to plan and finance their businesses.

The review which I announced on 19 January 2004, *Official Report,* columns 1075–78, will not change the Government's acceptance of the Regulator's determination of Network Rail's income for the next five years as set out in his December 2003 Final Conclusions and any further conclusions he may reach; and the Government will ensure that the Strategic Rail Authority has sufficient funds to meet its resulting commitments. As I made clear in my statement of 15 December 2003, *Official Report,* columns 122–24WS, regulatory promises will be honoured, and the Government recognises, and is content, that only the Regulator can re-open his determinations.

The independence of economic regulation has already been clearly set out in my statement of 19 January. The Government also rules out any change to the rights of third parties, which will be protected. There is no question of weakening the effectiveness of economic regulation. The Government recognises that maintaining fully effective and independent economic regulation is critical for retaining investor confidence. There will be no diminution in the regulatory protection of the private sector investors in the railway.

The review announced on 19 January will consider how Government can control the total public expenditure on the railways, while respecting the principles set out above. It will also need to consider whether options for changes to the industry structure might imply consequential changes to the details of economic regulation.

Railways are essential to the economy of Britain. Whatever the institutional structure, the Government will need to be at least as closely involved as it currently is in expenditure decisions and in making financial commitments to the industry and those who finance it; so that lenders to the industry enjoy at least the same strength of financial support from Government as they do today.

Railways (Subsidy)

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total amount of Government subsidy for the railways was in 2002–03. [152536]

Mr. McNulty: In 2002–03, central Government support to the rail industry was £2,284 million.

Road Accidents

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the number of road traffic accidents in which use of cannabis was a contributory factor. [151136]

Mr. Jamieson: In a research study on the incidence of drugs and alcohol in a sample of 1,184 road accident fatalities between 1996 and 1999, TRL Report 495, it was found that 13 per cent. of car drivers had traces of cannabis in the body. However, presence of a drug in the body cannot alone be directly related to any contributory role in accidents. In the case of cannabis the research also noted that it may remain traceable in the blood stream for up to four weeks after it is taken by regular users, whereas its effect on driving is probably limited to a few hours at most.

Routine accident statistics do not record drugs as a contributory factor. But under a pilot scheme on contributory factors begun in 1999 it was assessed that drugs of any kind were a factor in about one per cent. of injury accidents.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the number of *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* injuries as a result of road traffic accidents on the A54 road between Shrewsbury and Telford for each month over the last 12 months; [151371]

(2) if he will list the number of *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* injuries as a result of road traffic accidents on the A458 road between Shrewsbury and Welshpool for each month over the last 12 months; [151372]

(3) how many *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* injuries there were as a result of road traffic accidents on (i) the A5 between Shrewsbury and Oswestry and (ii) the A49 between Shrewsbury and Ludlow, in each of the last 12 months. [151445]

Mr. Jamieson: The following tables are taken from figures provided by West Mercia Police.

M54/A5, from M54 J4 (Telford) to A5 Baileys Roundabout (Shrewsbury)—2003

Month	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
January	0	0	1	1
February	0	0	4	4
March	0	0	0	0
April	0	0	2	2
May	0	0	5	5
June	0	0	1	1
July	0	0	3	3
August	0	0	2	2
September	0	0	0	0
October	0	0	0	0
November	0	1	0	1
December	0	1	0	1
Total	0	2	18	20

A458 Trunk Road from Churncote Roundabout, Shrewsbury to Welsh Border—2003 [1]

Month	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
January	0	0	0	0
February	0	0	1	1
March	0	0	8	8
April	0	1	2	3
May	0	1	6	7
June	0	0	3	3
July	0	0	1	1
August	0	0	1	1
September	0	0	0	0
October	0	0	0	0
November	0	0	6	6
December	0	0	0	0
Total	0	2	28	30

[1] The section of A458 between the Welsh Border and Welshpool is the responsibility of the Welsh National Assembly.

A5 from Baileys Roundabout Shrewsbury to Welsh Border—2003

Month	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
January	0	0	4	4
February	0	1	3	4
March	0	1	2	3
April	0	0	1	1
May	0	0	2	2
June	0	1	4	5
July	0	1	3	4
August	1	4	11	16
September	0	0	3	3
October	0	1	3	4
November	0	1	3	4
December	0	0	2	2
Total	1	10	41	52

A49 from Baileys Roundabout Shrewsbury to Worcestershire/ Shropshire County Boundary—2003

Month	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
January	0	0	5	5
February	0	0	9	9
March	0	1	5	6
April	0	0	5	5
May	0	0	2	2
June	0	0	6	6
July	0	1	3	4
August	0	0	6	6
September	0	0	7	7
October	0	0	3	3
November	0	2	14	17
December	0	0	5	5
Total	1	4	70	75

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* serious injuries and *(b)* fatalities caused by road accidents have occurred in *(a)* Southend and *(b)* Southend West in each of the last 20 years. [153477]

Mr. Jamieson: Information on road accidents and casualties is not available for Parliamentary Constituencies except at disproportionate cost. Figures for the Southend unitary authority (and borough of Southend prior to 1 April 1998) are shown in the following table.

Fatalities and serious injuries: Southend Unitary Authority: 1983–2002

	Casualties	
Year[1]	Killed	Seriously injured
1983	12	181
1984	14	200
1985	11	232
1986	7	204
1987	25	213
1988	11	156
1989	12	163
1990	12	143
1991	8	97
1992	6	104
1993	4	91
1994	5	111
1995	5	106
1996	4	110
1997	6	121
1998	4	103
1999	11	75
2000	6	100
2001	5	82
2002	6	94

[1] 1983 1 April 1998 borough of Southend, 1 April 1998–2002 Southend Unitary Authority.

Road Humps

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to issue a traffic guidance note on road humps. [152247]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport plans to publish, for consultation, a local transport note giving guidance on traffic calming (including road humps) in autumn 2004.

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the damage to vehicles from speed humps; and what compensation is available to the owners of vehicles damaged by speed humps. [153145]

Mr. Jamieson: In the mid 1990s, investigations were carried out into the grounding of vehicles on road humps. These revealed that installing road humps 75 mm in height (compared to 100 mm) substantially reduced the risk of vehicles grounding with little or no

erosion in the speed reductions achieved. Following anecdotal claims of damage, the Department commissioned, in 2001, TRL to look at the impact of repeated crossing of road humps on vehicles and their occupants. The results of this work will be published later this year.

Section 90E of the Highways Act 1980 expressly provides that, where road humps or traffic calming measures have been constructed in accordance with the statutory requirements, they are to be treated as part of the highway and not as an obstruction. The road humps should either comply with minimum standards set out in the Highway (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 or otherwise be authorised by the Secretary of State (there is an additional special procedure for authorising road humps in London). If a road hump is not so constructed, it may constitute an obstruction or nuisance in which case an individual may be able to obtain compensation for damages that are attributable to the presence of the hump in the road. A court would determine such liability, if it exists, in accordance with common law principles.

Ryanair Decision

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what implications for the air services at publicly owned airports in the UK he has identified in the decision of the European Commission in the case affecting Ryanair; and if he will make a statement. [153412]

Mr. McNulty: We will consider carefully all aspects of the case affecting Ryanair at Charleroi once we have received the full text of the European Commission's decision. I note from the Commission's press notice that the decision does not rule out the possibility of start-up funding for new routes at regional airports, provided certain conditions are met.

Sea Cadet Training Posts

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many sea cadet training posts have been funded by the Government in each of the last six years. [152948]

Mr. Jamieson: The following numbers of new starters have been funded under the Support for Maritime Training (SMarT) scheme in the last six years.

	Number
1989–99	498
1999–2000	513
2000–01	472
2001–02	480
2002–03	557
2003–04	[1]566

[1] Estimate. Will be confirmed by year-end return process.

Seafarer Training

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Government have spent on seafarer training in each of the last six years. [152949]

Mr. Jamieson: The following amounts of funding have been provided under the Support for Maritime Training Scheme (SMarT) in the last six years.

	£ million
1989–99	1.8
1999–2000	5.7
2000–01	6.3
2001–02	6.4
2002–03	7.3
2003–04	[1]6.4

[1] To date. Will be confirmed during year-end reporting process.

Shipping Strategy Paper

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans his Department has to carry out an assessment of the progress made in implementing the shipping strategy paper, "British Shipping: Charting a New Course", published in December 1998. [152952]

Mr. Jamieson: The progress made in implementing the actions from "British Shipping: Charting a New Course" is monitored during meetings of the Shipping Task Force.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which safety camera partnerships moved cameras for reasons of effectiveness between 1 January and 31 December 2003. [149989]

Mr. Jamieson: All Safety Camera Partnerships regularly move cameras between their approved fixed camera housings and deploy mobile camera units flexibly between approved locations at different times.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much money was raised in fines from speed cameras in the last year for which records are available in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire; [150887]

(2) how much money raised in fines from speed cameras during the last year for which records are available was spent in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire; and how that money was spent. [150886]

Mr. Jamieson: The amounts of fixed penalty receipts from speed and red traffic light cameras in the areas covered by the Government Office for the East Midlands for the latest year for which figures are available are:

	2001–02		
	Fine receipts	*Reimbursed to partnership*	*To HMT*
East Midlands			
Derbyshire	654,000	502,126	151,874
Leicestershire[1]	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lincolnshire	855,480	486,891	368,589
Northamptonshire	2,967,640	2,247,838	719,802
Nottingham	812,640	778;536	34,104

[1] Leicestershire did not join the scheme until April 2002.

Note:

Figures for speed cameras alone are not separately available.

It is not possible to identify West Derbyshire separately from the county. All fine income surplus to that returned to the partnerships to cover their safety camera activity is passed to the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who appointed the members of the Lancashire Safety Camera partnership; what the length is of their term of office; and to whom they are accountable. [151266]

Mr. Jamieson: Safety Camera Partnerships comprise representatives of local police authorities, local highways authorities and magistrates' court committees. The Chief Officer of these organisations appointed the members of the Lancashire Safety Camera Partnership. Each authority and its organisation is subject to their respective provisions for accountability and terms of appointment.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras *(a)* there are and *(b)* there have been in each of the last five years in (i) Essex and (ii) the west Chelmsford constituency. [151356]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* The Essex Safety Camera Partnership covers the whole of the county. Separate information is not available for the west Chelmsford area. Details of the number of speed camera locations, for the Essex partnership are:

	Fixed locations	*Mobile locations or routes*
1999	28	44
2000	28	110
2001	28	259
2002	37	219
2003	54	318

Police authorities also have operational discretion to deploy cameras exceptionally at other locations, including "community concern sites" where there is evidence of speeding causing concern to local residents.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the safety camera partnerships in Wales and the revenue that they have raised for each year since they were created. [151747]

Mr. Jamieson: There are two Safety Camera Partnerships in Wales. The North Wales Partnership joined the cost recovery scheme in October 2001. In that year conditional offer fixed penalty fines for speeding and red light offences were £648,780. The South Wales Safety Camera Partnership joined the scheme at its inception in April 2000.

Conditional offer fixed penalty fines for speeding and red light offences were £1,567,000 in South Wales in 2000–01 and £1,876,240 in 2001–02.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic speed cameras there are in each of the areas covered by each of the police forces in Wales; and what the estimated revenue from them is in the current financial year. [152538]

Mr. Jamieson: Information on camera activity in safety camera partnerships is not available by constituency areas. The number of approved camera sites in the North and South Wales partnerships for the current financial year is:

North Wales—66

South Wales—357

These figures cover both fixed and mobile speed camera sites but exclude red traffic light cameras.

The South Wales Partnership consists of three police force areas—South Wales, Gwent and Dyfed and Powys.

The 2003–04 operational cases for the two partnerships included the following estimated fixed fine receipts:

	Total estimated fine receipts (£)
North Wales	4,280,400
South Wales	7,980,000

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1377W, on speed cameras (Essex), whether the sum of £1,846.480 includes the costs of purchasing speed cameras. [152694]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* Yes.

Speed Restrictions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used to determine speed restrictions in built up areas. [152158]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government provides guidance to local authorities on the setting of local speed limits. The guidance on 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits is contained in Circular Roads 05/99. That on other speed limits is in Circular Roads 1/93. Copies of both may be found in the House of Commons Library and on the DfT website.

Tonnage Tax Scheme

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans his Department has to widen the training requirement for entry into the tonnage tax scheme to include a requirement for the employment of British officers. [152945]

Mr. Jamieson: Members of the Shipping Task Force have been invited to submit proposals for an employment link in tonnage tax. We expect to have first sight of the proposals in the next few weeks and they will be considered without commitment.

Train Services (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the most recent figures are for *(a)* reliability, *(b)* punctuality, *(c)* public performance measures and *(d)* complaints for each train operator operating services in Lancashire. [153499]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) measures train performance by the Public Performance Measure (PPM), which combines reliability and punctuality. It is published, by train operator, in the SRA's quarterly National Rail Trends (NRT). The latest publication covers performance to the year ending 30 September 2003 and is placed in the Library of the House.

Until March 2003, complaints data, by train operator, were published in the SRA's six-monthly "On Track" publication. Copies of "On Track" are placed in the Library of the House. In future, complaints data, by

train operator, will appear annually in Quarter 4 of NRT, which will also act as an annual compendium of statistics. This will be published in the summer.

Transatlantic Air Services

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress between the European Commission and the United States Administration on liberalisation of transatlantic air services. [153795]

Mr. McNulty: The next round of EU/US negotiations is to be held in Washington on 17 to 19 February. Some good progress has been made at earlier rounds, but major issues remain unresolved.

Transport and Works Act

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the decision-making process for applications made under the Transport and Works Act 1992; and if he will make statement. [149987]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department consulted publicly last September on a package of measures designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the TWA process and we are currently considering the comments received with a view to implementing improvements during the course of the year. A key feature of our proposed changes is that they are designed to secure better and fuller information at an earlier stage. This will, in turn, help to ensure that we can reach decisions more quickly upon receipt of an inspector's report. We also intend to consult in the next few months on changes to the model clauses for TWA Orders, which will help to ensure that applications are in better shape when they come in.

Transport for the Elderly

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the effect of the availability of transport on the well-being of elderly people. [153997]

Mr. McNulty: The Department has a wide-ranging research programme looking into the transport needs of older and disabled people as well as other vulnerable groups in society. We recognise that a lack of mobility can prevent older people from participating in social activities and lead to low morale, depression and loneliness. It can also impact upon others, such as carers, social services and health agencies. A recent—January 2001—study indicated that the requirements of older people are similar to those of other members of society and major concerns include accessibility of vehicles, safety, reliability and cost.

We are making significant headway in all these areas, in particular in the provision of accessible public transport vehicles—for example, over a third of buses used on scheduled services are now fully accessible—and have introduced a provision under the Transport Act 2000 that guarantees pensioners and disabled people an entitlement to at least half-fares or better on local bus services, with the travel pass being free of charge.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the extent to which vehicle excise duty reflects the environmental impact of different models of vehicle. [152069]

Mr. Jamieson: The graduated Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) regime, which was introduced in March 2001, is designed to encourage motorists to choose less polluting vehicles by giving clear signals to them about the environmental impacts of their car purchasing decisions. Its primary aim is to incentivise the purchase of the most fuel-efficient cars, as a way of helping to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide from the transport sector. It is also designed to reflect the different emissions of local air pollutants from diesel, petrol and alternatively fuelled cars. As with all taxes, the Government keeps VED under review, and since the introduction of the scheme we have introduced a number of modifications to give greater incentives to those who purchase the most fuel-efficient vehicles. As the Chancellor announced in his Pre-Budget Report in December 2003, the Government is currently considering how the effectiveness of the scheme might be further improved.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received on the level at which vehicle excise duty is charged. [152070]

Mr. Jamieson: During the last 12 months my department dealt with 265 pieces of correspondence concerning VED from Members of Parliament the public and organisations.

Most of the correspondence dealt with two matters:

(a) enforcement of VED, and

(b) whether existing exemptions from payment of VED might be extended to particular groups of motorists or classes of vehicle.

Very little of this correspondence deals with the level of VED charged. Where it does however, it tends to be by way of suggestions that certain, generally larger vehicles, should be taxed more heavily.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on vehicle excise duty. [152071]

Mr. Jamieson: Vehicle Excise Duty is a tax on mechanically propelled vehicles. It raises about £4.5 billion annually and has two purposes in addition to the raising of revenue:

(a) Through the licensing process it ensures checking of insurance and MOT documents, and;

(b) It provides an opportunity to influence vehicle purchase e.g. on environmental and road friendliness grounds.

Cars registered since 1 March 2001 are taxed mostly according to their CO_2 emissions, with VED set for the lowest emitting petrol cars at £55, ranging up to £165 for the highest emitting diesel cars. UK lorry rates are related to vehicle weight and configuration and are some of the lowest in Europe.

There are a number of concessionary VED rates and exemptions which are sometimes subject to discussion with the various interest groups. While there will always be room for debate at the margins, the Government believes the balance is broadly right between those paying VED at the normal rate for the vehicle, those paying at concessionary rates and those who are exempt from VED.

We have considerably tightened the enforcement of VED through the "continuous registration" package of measures. By introducing continuous registration and using modern technology, we are improving the accuracy of the register to the benefit of law enforcement and the honest motorist. To deal with short term evasion we have introduced fines for those over a month overdue with relicensing, while tackling those vehicles already outside the system of registration and licensing with enhanced enforcement using wheel clamping and ANPR cameras.

This should enhance the quality of the DVLA vehicle register so assisting the police in the fight against crime, and also assist local authorities track down and enforce costs against those who abandon vehicles.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will re-introduce the rolling 25-year rule for exempting vehicles from excise duty; and if he will make a statement. [153366]

Mr. Jamieson: The Chancellor of the Exchequer takes decisions on transport taxation, including vehicle excise duty, on a Budget-by-Budget basis, taking a range of economic, social and environmental factors into consideration. The Government acknowledge the role historic vehicle enthusiasts play in maintaining that part of the country's history and heritage, but need also to recognise the poorer environmental performance of older vehicles. The current exemption for vehicles constructed before 1 January 1973 is designed to strike the right balance between environmental and heritage needs.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Tagging

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are tagged for the purpose of a curfew order. [151780]

Paul Goggins: At midnight on 31 December 2003, a total of 8,733 people were currently tagged for the purpose of a curfew.

Anti-social Behaviour

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what advice he has given to *(a)* police and *(b)* local councils on (i) the need to liaise with each other, (ii) the protocols for publishing intentions in the local press and (iii) operational protocols in respect of anti-social behaviour legislation; [152427]

(2) what guidance he has issued to *(a)* local councils and *(b)* the police on the use of anti-social behaviour legislation to disperse groups of youths. [152428]

Ms Blears: We have issued a "Together Campaign Pack" which provides information and tools for local authorities, police and other practitioners to run campaigns against anti-social behaviour in their area. It encourages practitioners to keep the public and partner organisations informed and involved in the work they are doing to tackle anti-social behaviour.

We have also issued Home Office Circular number 04/2004 describing the owers to disperse groups contained in Part 4 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. The circular provides information to assist the police and local authorities in the use of the new powers. The National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) has been asked to produce further guidance on these new powers. We hope to publish the guidance later this year.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a code of practice for police operations in respect of recent anti-social behaviour legislation. [153077]

Ms Blears: We have published "A Guide to the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003", copies of which were sent to all Chief Constables in England and Wales and Members of Parliament. In addition, we have produced some detailed guidance on the measures in the Act for practitioners, including the police. Examples of these include:

Notes of Guidance to Accompany Part One of the Act, The Power to Close Premises' where drugs are used unlawfully.

Home Office Circular 04/2004 on the use of the powers to disperse groups contained in Part 4 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Home Office Circular 01/2004 on the purpose and effect of the firearms provisions contained in Part 5 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Information on when further guidance will be issued on other measures in the Act is contained in the Guide to the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Bribery

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign nationals are being held without trial or charge in HM Prison Belmarsh; for how long each has been held; how many hours a day they are allowed out of their cell for *(a)* meals, *(b)* religious worship, *(c)* recreation and *(d)* association; and if he will make a statement. [151472]

Paul Goggins: 31 foreign nationals are being held at Belmarsh prison in the circumstances my hon. Friend describes. These persons are detained in respect of extradition or immigration matters. Those detained under the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 are free to leave the country at any time. The date of arrival into custody for each is as follows:

9 November 1995
15 July 1999
6 November 2000
21 November 2000
17 April 2001
17 May 2001
4 July 2001
25 July 2001
19 December 2001 (three persons)
8 February 2002
23 April 2002
27 September 2002
24 October 2002
14 January 2003
24 May 2003
12 August 2002
13 November 2002
23 November 2002
27 December 2002
30 January 2003
1 September 2003
5 September 2003
1 October 2003
17 October 2003
7 November 2003
4 December 2003 (two persons)
28 December 2003
29 December 2003

The general regime at Belmarsh allows prisoners to be out of their cells for an average of 7½ hours per day. This will include meals, religious worship, recreation and association. Some prisoners will be allowed out of cell for greater periods of time due to the nature of their work.

Burglary (Sentences)

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average sentence for *(a)* house burglary and *(b)* burglary of a premises other than a house was in each of the last six years. [152121]

Paul Goggins: The available information, relating to the average custodial sentence length for persons sentenced for domestic and other burglary (including aggravated burglary) in England and Wales, 1997 to 2002, is contained in the table.

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Average custodial sentence length imposed at all courts on persons convicted of offences of burglary, England and Wales, 1997 to 2002[1]

	Average custodial sentence length (months)			
	In a dwelling		*In a building other than a dwelling*	
	Burglary	*Aggravated burglary*	*Burglary*	*Aggravated burglary*
1997	18.1	45.5	8.4	30.7
1998	17.9	[2]46.0	8.6	38.8
1999	18.3	45.5	7.9	39.2
2000	18.7	48.6	8.3	49.0
2001	19.7	[3]50.2	8.4	40.9
2002	20.9	[3]50.1	8.8	45.0

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Excludes one person sentenced to life.
[3] Excludes three persons sentenced to life.

Coroners

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to regulate the basis on which coroners decide on the re-opening of a case. [151716]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* We do not intend to regulate this, as it is primarily a judicial matter which should therefore be left to the discretion of the coroner.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 18 August 2003 from the hon. Member for Northavon, reference M4678/3, on behalf of Mrs. Davies, regarding victims of crime. [151709]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 24 January 2004]:* Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC replied to the hon. Member on 2 February 2004.

Crime/Police Statistics (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many murders there were in Southend in each of the last 10 years; and how many resulted in convictions. [152200]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* Published information on homicide relates to England and Wales only. The latest available is given in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 01/04, 'Crime in England and Wales 2002/2003: Supplementary Volume 1: Homicide and Gun Crime', a copy of which should be available from the Library or internet site http://www.homeoffice gov.uk/rds/hosbpubsl.html.

Criminal Behaviour

Mrs. Claire Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to tackle the problem of persistent offenders. [150352]

Paul Goggins: The Persistent Offender Scheme came into effect in April 2003. It is an obligatory component of Local Criminal Justice Boards' action plans to increase the number of offences brought to justice, aimed at targeting a small group of prolific offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime. Areas have devised their own premium service protocols which include elements of proactive policing, improved investigations and case management, priority court listings, and strategies for rehabilitation. As well as targeting core persistent offenders, who are 18 or over and have been convicted of 6 or more recordable offences in the last year, as part of their wider crime reduction strategies areas are also using the scheme flexibly to target persistent offenders defined on the basis of local intelligence. As well as targeting core persistent offenders, who are 18 or over and have been convicted of 6 or more recordable offences in the last year, as part of their wider crime reduction strategies areas are also using the scheme flexibly to target persistent offenders defined on the basis of local intelligence.

The Scheme is supported by an information system that is shared between criminal justice agencies, enabling persistent offenders to be tracked as their cases progress through the criminal justice system, and attrition points in the system to be identified and targeted for intervention.

On 13 November 2003, criminal justice areas were notified of the outcome of a review of the Persistent Offender Scheme. Among the key actions being implemented as part of the response to the review are: changes to the performance measurement framework, including giving credit for performance relating to local persistent offenders; and updated guidance to the National Probation Service on the Scheme, which was issued on 22 December 2003.

The National Probation Service is piloting 15 Intensive Supervision and Monitoring Schemes (ISMs) for persistent offenders in local probation/police areas. All Schemes involve joint working between probation and police. In addition, some Schemes are testing mechanisms for involving the prison service in pre-release work with persistent offenders. ISMs target the most prolific offenders in a locality, based on police intelligence. They provide intensive surveillance and supervision of offenders, offering fast access to services and support for rehabilitation, alongside swift action and penalties for non-compliance. They involve other partner agencies such as providers of housing, education and training, alcohol and drug abuse treatment groups and employment services.

In addition, the Government has given the courts new secure remand and tagging powers for 12 to 16-year olds who repeatedly offend on bail, funded the Youth

Justice Board's intensive supervision and surveillance programmes for the most prolific young offenders and renewed its commitment to maintain the time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders at or below 71 days.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will extend compensation to victims who were abused or injured by someone living in their household before October 1979. [146284]

Paul Goggins: No. Revision of the 'Pre-1.10.79 same roof' rule has been considered whenever changes to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme have been mooted. However, successive Administrations have always refused to change it.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of time taken to settle applications for criminal injuries compensation was in 2003. [149553]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority advise that in the year ending 31 December 2003 the average time between the date an application was received and the date the applicant was notified of the decision on that application was, for the 74,175 cases so determined, 288 days.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for criminal injuries compensation were received in each of the past four years; and what the average award was for each of those years. [149554]

Paul Goggins: The following information has been provided by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

The Tariff Scheme (effective for all cases received on or after 1 April 1996)

	Number of applications	*Money awards*	*Nil awards*	*Average award*
1999–2000	78,742	39,700	36,217	2,904
2000–01	76,510	36,924	33,789	3,001
2001–02	78,202	39,813	35,005	3,150
2002–03	73,928	42,283	36,965	3,717

The Old (Common Law Damages) Scheme

	Money awards	*Nil awards*	*Average award*
1999–2000	3,795	3,309	23,907
2000–01	2,087	985	44,745
2001–02	1,538	536	71,318
2002–03	405	319	169,034

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish all the responses to his consultation paper, "Compensation and Support for Victims of Crime". [150139]

Paul Goggins: Our intention is to publish a summary of the responses. All responses will be acknowledged and respondents told that the outcome of the consultation will be published.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was paid by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme in each of the last 10 years, broken down by type of crime; and what proportion was paid to victims of crimes *(a)* when the criminal was arrested, *(b)* when the criminal was arrested and charged and *(c)* when the criminal was arrested, charged and successfully prosecuted, in each year. [150140]

Paul Goggins: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS) provides compensation at the taxpayers' expense to blameless victims of crimes of violence and those injured in trying to apprehend criminals or prevent crime. It does not compensate victims of other types of crime.

Claims are determined on the basis of applications and supporting information submitted by applicants, and upon the outcome of such other inquiries about the applicant's injuries and other aspects of eligibility as the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) considers it necessary to make.

Payment of compensation under the scheme is not conditional upon the offender having been charged or convicted or even identified. The burden of proof required under the scheme is 'the balance of probabilities' (the civil burden of proof) rather than 'beyond reasonable doubt' (the level of proof required in criminal courts).

CICA do not keep statistics about whether or when those who inflicted injury upon CICS claimants were arrested, charged or successfully prosecuted.

The amount of compensation paid to victims in each of the last 10 years under the scheme was as follows:

	£ million
1993–94	165
1994–95	175
1995–96	179
1996–97	209
1997–98	202
1998–99	194
1999–2000	205
2000–01	208
2001–02	233
2002–03	232

These figures represent the cash actually paid over in each year. However, in 2000–01 the basis of government accounting changed from a cash to an accruals basis, under which the recorded spend now is the amount of money committed in the year, irrespective of when payments were actually made.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has collated on *(a)* moneys paid out by and *(b)* funding sources of equivalents to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme in other EU countries. [150780]

Paul Goggins: Information about the amount of compensation paid and the number of applications received during one year under the state compensation

schemes in each EU Member State is given at paragraph 3.8 of the European Commission's Green Paper, 'Compensation to crime victims' (reference COM(2001)536) issued on 28 September 2001. The paper can be accessed via the Internet at http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/green/index.en.htm and then clicking on the document just mentioned. Further information about compensation schemes in other European countries can be found in 'Victims of Crime in 22 European Criminal Justice Systems' by M. E. I. Brienen and D. H. Hoegen published in 2000 (ISBN:90–5850–004–7); and in 'Repairing the Irreparable: State compensation to crime victims in the European Union' by Julia Mikaelsson and Anna Wergens published in 2001 (ISBN 91–974139–1-7).

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether foreigners who are victims of crime in the UK are eligible for the criminal compensation scheme. [150804]

Paul Goggins: Yes. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme operates in England, Scotland and Wales. Anyone sustaining injury there as a result of violent crime is eligible to apply. There is a separate scheme in Northern Ireland, modelled closely on the GB Scheme.

Criminal Records Bureau

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have now been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau; and how many checks are outstanding. [143063]

Ms Blears: As of 31 January 2004 the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) had issued 3,283,723 Disclosures. The first million Disclosures were issued by the CRB within 10 months, the second million within six months and the third million within five months. This reflects the CRB's increased capacity to handle over 50,000 Disclosure applications per week.

As of 31 January 2004 the CRB has 107,219 applications outstanding (excluding those that have been returned to the customer). 03,840 of these applications are less than four weeks old with only 987 applications, approximately one per cent.of the overall total, still being processed after six weeks

Curfew Orders (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many home curfew orders have been made in Southend in each of the last five years. [152162]

Paul Goggins: The available information is contained in the table and relates to offenders sentenced to a curfew order at court.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Number of offenders sentenced to a curfew order for all offences at South East Essex Petty Sessional Area[1] including those sentenced at the Crown Court where South East Essex PSA was the committing court[2], 1998 to 2002

	Number
1998	—
1999	—
2000	8
2001	6
2002	13

[1] Covers Southend and some parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.
[2] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the number of people who have been killed in each of the last 10 years at the hands of people receiving treatment for mental health problems. [143057]

Paul Goggins: Information on the mentally disordered state of the offenders, or whether they were receiving treatment at the time is not held centrally. The available information is in the form of currently recorded homicides where the apparent circumstances of the offence involved a mentally disturbed suspect. From 1992 to 1997 the statistics record homicides by calendar year and from 1997–98 financial years are used. There is duplication between 1997 and 1997–98, but it is standard practice to provide both periods.

The number of victims is given in the following table.

	Number of victims
1992	12
1993	34
1994	46
1995	39
1996	36
1997	42
1997–98	39
1998–99	28
1999–2000	22
2000–01	16
2001–02	32

Data as for 8 October 2002, figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts or as further information becomes available.

Detention and Training Orders

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances magistrates can impose a detention and training order on an offender aged 12 to 14 years who has been convicted of breaching an anti-social behaviour order. [150993]

Paul Goggins: A court sentencing an offender aged 12–14 for breach of an anti-social behaviour order can make a Detention and Training Order in the same circumstances as for other criminal offences attracting custody. That is, where:

> it decides that the effect of the breach either in itself or in combination with associated offences, is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified; or

the anti-social behaviour involves a violent or sexual offence and only a custodial sentence.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the changes in the costs of introduction of the detention and training orders. [151132]

Paul Goggins: We estimate the average cost of a Detention and Training Order to be £27,000. That is an average for all sentence lengths and all types of establishment (Young Offender Institutions, Secure Training Centres and Local Authority Secure Children's Homes). It includes both the custodial and the community parts of the Order.

Drug Treatment and Testing Orders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of drug treatment and testing orders. [150353]

Paul Goggins: The evidence shows that Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) do work and that the longer offenders remain in treatment, the more likely they are to reduce their levels of offending and drug misuse (National Treatment Outcome Research Study 2001). An evaluation of the 3 DTTO pilots found that, on average, offenders committed 75 per cent. fewer offences while on the order and reduced their spend on drugs by over 90 per cent.

A two-year follow up reconviction study of offenders from the three DTTO pilot sites found that:

There was a significant reduction in the average number of convictions per year in the two years following the order in all three pilot sites; and

Those who had completed DTTOs had a reconviction rate of only 53 per cent. compared with 91 per cent. for revokees, and reduced their annual conviction rate to levels significantly below those of the previous five years.

Eastern European Immigrants

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what research he has based his estimates of the likely levels of immigration from Eastern European countries after accession to the EU in May. [153096]

Beverley Hughes: The Home Office commissioned research by University College London to look at the impact of EU accession (published in 2003 and available on the Home Office website (RDS On-line Report 25/03). In this report the authors reviewed the literature on potential migration flows following enlargement, analysed the experience of previous enlargements and developed their own model to estimate net migration from the new member states to the UK. This research was peer reviewed by scientific experts in the field.

The findings were broadly in line with previous research, in particular, reports by the European Commission in 2000 ("European Commission information note on free movement in the context of workers") and the former Department for Education and Employment in 1999 ("Assessment of possible migration pressure and its labour market impact following EU enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe").

Electronic Tagging

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are on electronic tags, broken down by *(a)* sex, *(b)* offence, *(c)* length of sentence and *(d)* region. [149091]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Figures for those on home detention curfew at the end of November 2003, having been released from prison are given in the following tables broken down by sex, offence, sentence length and region.

Number on Home Detention Curfew, by offence, at end November 2003

	Total	*Male*	*Female*
Violence against the person	656	617	39
Robbery	343	300	43
Burglary	447	419	28
Theft and handling	381	327	54
Fraud and forgery	217	173	44
Drugs offences	695	578	117
Other offences	719	673	46
Offence not recorded	131	126	5
Total	3,589	3,213	376

Number on Home Detention Curfew, by sentence length, at end November 2003

	Number
Three to less than six months	362
Six to less than 12 months	500
12 to less than 18 months	555
18 months to less than two years.	512
Two years to less than four years	1,660
Total	3,589

Estimated number on Home Detention Curfew, by region, at end November 2003

	Number
Northern	1,146
Southern	574
London and Eastern	868
Midlands and Wales	1,001
Total	3,589

The figures by region are estimates, and represent contractor regions.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his conclusions are arising from trials involving electronic tagging of juvenile sex offenders. [150749]

Paul Goggins: There have been no trials of electronic tagging for juvenile sex offenders in England and Wales.

Fines

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* fines and *(b)* other financial penalties were imposed by the courts for criminal offences during 2000–01, broken down by police authority in England and Wales; and how many of these were paid fully and on time. [152186]

Paul Goggins: The number of offenders ordered to pay a fine or compensation order or who have received a confiscation order (monetary) for all offences at all courts, England and Wales 2000–01, by Police Force Area is contained in the table.

Details on the number of these financial penalties paid fully and on time, is not available centrally.

Number of offenders sentenced to pay a fine, or compensation order or who have confiscation order (monetary) at all courts for all offences, by England and Wales 2000–01 [1]

Police Force Area	*Fine*	*Compensation order*	*Confiscation order*
Avon and Somerset	25,763	2,467	18
Bedfordshire	9,267	659	6
Cambridgeshire	5,652	919	8
Cheshire	20,387	2,028	8
Cleveland	12,397	1,531	4
Cumbria	9,318	1,387	10
Derbyshire	19,099	1,733	41
Devon and Cornwall	24,123	2,641	9
Dorset	10,026	1,076	11
Durham	8,385	1,558	8
Essex	32,515	2,963	5
Gloucestershire	10,699	851	7
Greater Manchester	83,566	5,432	91
Hampshire	32,869	3,605	19
Hertfordshire	16,095	2,173	4
Humberside	15,851	1,703	29
Kent	16,207	2,489	29
Lancashire	34,402	3,765	10
Leicestershire	20,066	1,432	29
Lincolnshire	14,103	1,388	9
London, City of	8,067	214	1
Merseyside	29,560	1,206	56
Metropolitan Police	140,011	17,573	263
Norfolk	9,341	1,297	5
Northamptonshire	9,949	915	16
Northumbria	34,817	3,775	15
North Yorkshire	9,230	1,471	8
Nottinghamshire	17,309	2,266	13
South Yorkshire	25,764	2,400	24
Staffordshire	11,547	2,045	4
Suffolk	10,050	1,253	5
Surrey	13,117	1,423	3
Sussex	21,438	2,778	30
Thames Valley	33,015	3,217	35
Warwickshire	12,682	788	11
West Mercia	18,860	2,379	18
West Midlands	54,163	6,008	60
West Yorkshire	50,347	4,388	13
Wiltshire	10,559	1,319	8
Dyfed Powys	8,921	983	2
Gwent	15,624	1,392	29
North Wales	12,555	1,501	9
South Wales	28,923	2,121	20
England and Wales	1,006,6	104,512	1,003

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis (but including primary and secondary schools).

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices were issued in the most recent period for which figures are available, broken down by police authority in England and Wales; what the total value of these penalty notices was; what proportion of these were paid in full and on time; and what proportion of those fined paid their penalty in full and on time. [152189]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* Information on fixed penalty notices issued for road traffic offences by police force area can be found in the annual Home Office publication 'Offences relating to motor vehicles, England and Wales Supplementary tables'—Tables 20(a) to 20(c) refers. The latest issue covers 2001. Copies are available from the Library. The total value of fixed penalty notices issued is not collected centrally.

Data are also collected centrally on the disposal, (ie. paid, fine registration certificate issued etc.) of fixed penalty notices issued for road traffic offences. However because of the time taken for the procedures for payment to be enforced the data are collected approximately nine months later than the period of issue. Tables 21(a) and 21(b) of the above 2001 publication details 2000 data by number and percentage of fixed penalty notices by result. Tables 20(a) to 20(c) of the 2000 publication cover that period. Information is not available on the number of fines paid in full and on time.

Over 6,000 penalty notices for disorder were issued in the year-long pilots in four police force areas which started in mid-2002. A Home Office Research Findings covering the evaluation of the pilots will be published shortly.

Highdown Prison

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken to address the shortfall of officers at HM Prison Highdown in Surrey. [151154]

Paul Goggins: Local recruitment campaigns for Prison Officers at Highdown and surrounding prisons have been held. Eight new officers are in the process of initial training at Highdown and will become fully operational on 7 March. In the Kent, Surrey and Sussex area a further 18 potential recruits are undergoing final checks into their suitability for posts in the Prison Service, some of whom are expected to be posted to Highdown. A further recruitment exercise is scheduled to begin in March.

Highdown is also currently operating a Contracted Supplementary Hours system which provides the equivalent of 14 additional officers.

Home Detention Curfew

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has collated on the use of the satellite global positioning system for monitoring those on Home Detention Curfew programmes. [148897]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office is aware of two pieces of research conducted by the Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis: A Report on Community Control, Radio Frequency (RF) Monitoring and Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) Monitoring (October 2002) and A Controlled Study of the Effects of Electronic Monitoring and Officer Caseload on Outcomes for Offenders on Community Control (March 2003). Officials have also visited programmes in Florida and Texas that use satellite global positioning systems to monitor offenders. The Home Office is testing tracking equipment using satellite global positioning systems and plans to pilot the use of this technology to track offenders later this year. No decisions have been taken about the categories of offenders who will be subject to tracking in the pilots.

Identity Card

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what safeguards will be put in place to ensure people who lose or have their identity cards stolen will be able to access basic services for which an identity card will be required. [152647]

Beverley Hughes: An identity card, although very helpful to public services as a reliable means of proving identity, would not become mandatory until a specific further Parliamentary decision on a move to compulsion. Where the identity card is used to access public services we will want to ensure that procedures are in place to help those whose card has been lost or stolen, especially in cases of emergency.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what lessons have been learned from countries with operational identity card schemes on combating identity card fraud; and if he will make a statement; [152679]

(2) whether the operation of identity cards in Australia was examined in estimating the annual cost of the proposed UK identity card scheme; and if he will make a statement. [152646]

Beverley Hughes: Identity card schemes exist in all other EU countries with the exception of Denmark and Ireland.

Home Office officials have had detailed discussions with colleagues involved in the operation of identity card schemes in Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands and comprehensive information has been supplied by each of the EU member states on the operation of their card schemes.

From these discussions, it is clear that the keys to an effective card scheme are the security of the issuing process, the physical security of the document itself and consistent procedures for using the card. Lessons learned from other countries, including those such as Australia, Canada and the USA that do not have identity cards, will help inform the delivery planning of the United Kingdom identity cards scheme.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects identity cards to become compulsory following the introduction of the proposed identity card scheme. [152681]

Beverley Hughes: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend, the Member for Crosby (Mrs. Curtis-Thomas) on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 212W.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of requiring electors to show a valid identity card in order to cast a vote at UK elections following the introduction of the proposed identity card scheme; and if he will make a statement. [152682]

Beverley Hughes: In Northern Ireland voters are already required to produce proof of their identity before they vote. The Electoral Fraud (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 introduced electoral identity cards in Northern Ireland as one of the four ways in which individuals can prove who they are when going to vote at an election in Northern Ireland.

There are no plans to extend this by requiring electors throughout the United Kingdom to show a valid identity card in order to cast a vote. However, discussions are continuing between the Home Office and other Departments on how production of an identity card might be linked to services for which they are responsible in the future.

Juvenile Prisoners

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times unfurnished cells have been used in each of the prisons holding juveniles in each month since 1 January 2002. [144959]

Paul Goggins: Date on the number of times juveniles have been placed in unfurnished cells in each of the juvenile establishments since 1 January 2002 is set out in the following tables.

Establishment	*January 2002*	*February 2002*	*March 2002*	*April 2002*	*May 2002*	*June 2002*	*July 2002*	*August 2002*
Ashfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Brinsford	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brockhill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bullwood Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Castington	7	3	4	1	1	4	0	1
Eastwood Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feltham	2	3	2	0	2	2	3	5
Hindley	0	0	0	0	4	5	1	4
Holloway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huntercombe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lanacaster Farms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Onley	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Parc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stoke Heath	2	4	2	1	1	1	3	4
Thorn Cross	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warren Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Werrington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetherby	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Establishment	September 2002	October 2002	November 2002	December 2002	January 2003	February 2003	March 2003	April 2003
Ashfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brinsford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brockhill	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Bullwood Hall	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Castington	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
Eastwood Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feltham	3	1	3	2	0	0	3	5
Hindley	3	3	1	0	1	1	0	0
Holloway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huntercombe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lanacaster Farms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Onley	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stoke Heath	2	5	4	0	2	0	0	1
Thorn Cross	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warren Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Werrington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetherby	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Establishment	May 2003	June 2003	July 2003	August 2003	September 2003	October 2003	November 2003	Total
Ashfield	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Brinsford	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	6
Brockhill	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Bullwood Hall	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Castington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
Eastwood Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feltham	6	4	1	1	4	3	5	60
Hindley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
Holloway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huntercombe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lanacaster Farms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Hall	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	4
Onley	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	8
Parc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stoke Heath	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	40
Thorn Cross	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warren Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Werrington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetherby	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Mentally Disordered Offenders

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the mentally disordered offenders listed in the 2003 Statistics published by the Home Office on 27 November 2003 were deaf; and what proportion were from a black and ethnic minority background. [147694]

Paul Goggins: The requested information is not held centrally and is therefore not available. Mechanisms have been put in place to collect information on the ethnicity of restricted patients. This information will be published as soon as is practically possible.

Motoring Offences (Fine Defaulters)

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people serving custodial sentences for motoring offences are doing so because of defaulting on fines. [151155]

Paul Goggins: At the end of November 2003, there were six people in prison who had defaulted on the payment of a fine for motoring offences.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the continuing responsibilities will be of *(a)* the National Probation Service and *(b)* the National Probation Directorate within the structures of the National Offender Management Service. [148000]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The future responsibilities of the National Probation Service and the National Probation Directorate have yet to be finalised. We are committed to maintaining local involvement in the delivery of correctional services. We do not yet have a final view on how best this can be achieved within the new structure and this is a specific issue on which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has asked for views.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the relationship will be between local probation areas, regional offender managers, national offender managers and the chief executive within the arrangements of the National Offender Management Service. [148001]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The Chief Executive of National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will lead the new service. The National Offender Manager will report directly to the Chief Executive and will be responsible for reducing re-offending and managing the budget for offender services. The Regional Offender Managers will report to the National Offender Manager and will have responsibility for end-to-end management of offenders in the nine English regions and Wales.

The relationship between local probation areas and NOMS have yet to be finalised. We are committed to maintaining local involvement in the delivery of correctional services. We do not yet have a final view on how best this can be achieved within the new structure and this is a specific issue on which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has asked for views.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the role of offender managers at the area level will be within the structure of the National Offender Management Service. [148002]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* The regional offender manager's role will be to provide dedicated end-to-end management of offenders regardless of whether they have received a custodial or community sentence or indeed a combination of the two. The offender manager will be able to provide interventions appropriate to the offender, purchasing these from the public, private, not for profit and voluntary sectors.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many additional staff will be employed in the National Offender Management Service to administer the new service at *(a)* national and *(b)* regional level. [150716]

Paul Goggins: The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised. It is too early to say how many staff will be needed in the new structure at either national or regional level.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the budget is for establishing the National Offender Management Service during *(a)* the current year and *(b)* each of the next three financial years. [150717]

Paul Goggins: The cost of establishing the National Offender Management service will be met from within existing Home Office provision in 2003–04 and 2004–05. Funding for 2005–06 onwards will be agreed as part of the current spending review.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the role will be of offender managers at area level under the new National Offender Management Service structure. [150718]

Paul Goggins: The regional offender manager's role will be to provide dedicated end-to-end management of offenders regardless of whether they have received a custodial or community sentence or indeed a combination of the two. The offender manager will be able to provide interventions appropriate to the offender, purchasing these from the public, private, not for profit and voluntary sectors.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the National Probation Service and its Directorate will continue to function under the new arrangements for the National Offender Management Service. [150719]

Paul Goggins: For the time being the National Probation Service and its Directorate will continue to function as they are at the moment. However, as the new organisation develops, offender managers from the National Offender Management Service will assume end-to-end responsibility for offenders and will contract with providers of services from within their areas regardless of whether the service is from the public, private or voluntary sector. We do not as yet have a finalised view as to the future of the 42 boards within this framework and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has therefore specifically sought the views of key stakeholders.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the relationship will be between the *(a)* local areas, *(b)* regional offender managers, *(c)* national offender managers and *(d)* the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service. [150720]

Paul Goggins: The Chief Executive of the National Offenders Management Service (NOMS), Martin Narey, will lead the new service. The National Offender Manager will report directly to the Chief Executive and will be responsible for reducing re-offending and managing the budget for offender services. The Regional Offender Managers will report to the National Offender Manager and will have responsibility for end-to-end management of offenders in the nine English regions and Wales.

The relationship between local probation areas and NOMS have yet to be finalised. We are committed to maintaining local involvement in the delivery of correctional services. We do not yet have a final view on how best this can be achieved within the new structure and this is a specific issue on which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has asked for views.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether local probation areas will become an integral arm of the National Offender Management Service with substantial day to day operational freedom. [150721]

Paul Goggins: Individual probation areas will continue to function as they are for the moment. However, as the new organisation develops, offender managers from the National Offender Management Service will assume end-to-end responsibility for offenders and will contract with providers of services from within the areas regardless of whether the service is from the public, private or voluntary sector. We do not as yet have a finalised view as to the future of the 42 boards within this framework and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has therefore specifically sought the views of key stakeholders.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the employer will be of probation and prison staff under the National Offender Management Service. [150722]

Paul Goggins: For most staff in prisons and probation the changes outlined in "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" are unlikely to have an immediate impact. They will continue to be employed by the probation boards and prison service. In time the relationships will change but those changes have yet to be finalised and will be subject to the usual consultation arrangements with staff and unions.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the National Offender Management Service will set up consultation committees with magistrates within the new structure for NOMS; what the line of accountability will be for prison and probation officers; whether probation areas will continue to have a role within multi-agency public protection panels; whether inter-agency work will be the subject of competitive tendering; and whether the supervision and potential recall of ex-prisoners will be opened up to competition. [150759]

Paul Goggins: The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised. As part of the implementation of the Reducing Crime—Changing Lives reforms the implementation team will consider the introduction of consultative committees and develop the details of contestability within the National Offender Management Service.

For most staff in prisons and probation the reforms are unlikely to have an immediate impact. They will continue to be employed by the probation boards and prison service. In time the relationships will change but those changes have yet to be finalised and will be subject to the usual consultation arrangements with staff and unions.

Individual probation areas will continue to function as they are at the moment. However, as the new organisation develops, offender managers from the National Offender Management Service will assume end-to-end responsibility for offenders and will contract with providers of services from within their areas regardless of whether the service is from the public, private or voluntary sector. Inter-agency work to protect the public and address rehabilitation will remain a crucial element of the work of the National Offender Management Service.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure the burden of administration for front line staff of the National Offender Management Service does not increase. [151193]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The Government is committed to the reduction of unnecessary bureaucracy, particularly in regard to demands on front line staff. The National Offender Management Service implementation team will seek to reduce the administrative demands on front line staff wherever possible.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff are expected to be employed by the National Offender Management Service *(a)* in headquarters and *(b)* in the regional offices. [151423]

Paul Goggins: The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the arrangements for collective bargaining will be within the structure of the National Offenders Management Service. [147626]

Paul Goggins: The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised. Once this is done, the Department will put in place appropriate mechanisms to allow collective bargaining to take place.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether individual probation areas will continue to function and have day-to-day operational freedom within the structure of the National Offenders Management Service. [147628]

Paul Goggins: For the time being individual probation areas will continue to function as they are at the moment. However, as the new organisation develops, offender managers from the National Offender Management Service will assume end-to-end responsibility for offenders and will contract with providers of services from within their areas regardless of whether the service is from the public, private or voluntary sector. We do not as yet have a finalised view as to the future of the 42 boards within this framework and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has therefore specifically sought the views of key stakeholders.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the lines of accountability of probation staff will differ under the structure of the National Offenders Management Service. [147629]

Paul Goggins: For most staff in prisons and probation the changes outlined in "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" are unlikely to have an immediate impact. They will continue to be employed by the probation boards and Prison Service. In time the relationships will change, but those changes have yet to be finalised and will be subject to the usual consultation arrangements with staff and unions.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what role probation areas will continue to have within Multi-agency public protection panels within the National Offenders Management Service structure; and what steps will be taken to ensure that the work is adequately funded. [147630]

Paul Goggins: For the time being individual probation areas will continue to function as they are at the moment. However, as the new organisation develops, offender managers from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will assume end-to-end responsibility for offenders, including a continuing role within Multi-agency Public Protection Panels. The future of the Probation Boards within NOMS is an issue on which we are seeking the views of key stakeholders.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether inter-agency public protection work within the structure of the National Offenders Management Service will be the subject of competitive tendering in future. [147631]

Paul Goggins: The details of contestability within correctional services will be developed as part of the "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" reforms. Inter-agency work to protect the public and encourage rehabilitation will remain a crucial element of the work of the National Offender Management Service.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the 42 probation areas under the National Offenders Management Service arrangements. [147661]

Paul Goggins: Although all probation staff will come within the ambit of the new National Offenders Management Service (NOMS), they will for the time being continue to be employed by the probation boards. We are committed to ensuring local delivery of correctional services but do not yet have a firm view on how this can be best achieved within the new single service. The future of the 42 probation boards is therefore a specific issue on which my right hon. friend the Home Secretary has asked for views.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether consultative committees with local magistrates will be introduced within the structure of the National Offenders Management Service. [147720]

Paul Goggins: The introduction of consultative committees within the structure of the National Offender Management Service will be considered by the implementation team as part of the implementation of the "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" reforms.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there will be a single employer under existing National Negotiating Committee arrangements for the purposes of collective bargaining within the structure of the National Offenders Management Service. [147722]

Paul Goggins: The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised. Once this is done, the Department will put in place appropriate mechanisms to allow collective bargaining to take place.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the National Offenders Management Service will work on a regional level closely with complementary services, including the police. [147765]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* Yes. As the report "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" makes clear, we believe the tasks of integrating the management of offenders whilst in custody or under supervision in the community is best managed at regional level where effective links can be forged and joint strategies developed with complementary services including police, health, education and employment. There will be 10 regional offender managers responsible for this in the nine English regions and Wales.

Open Prisons

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what targets have been set for the transfer of prisoners from closed prisons to open prisons; and how many *(a)* Category A prisoners, *(b)* Category B prisoners and *(c)* Category C prisoners were reclassified as Category D prisoners in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2002. [148878]

Paul Goggins: There are no binding targets for the transfer of prisoners from closed prisons to open prisons. There are agreed delivery levels for the transfer of prisoners from Category C conditions to open conditions, which are monitored by Area Managers but not enforced. Governors and Area Managers work to ensure that all prisoners assessed as suitable for open conditions are moved there as soon as possible. Any move to open conditions is subject to the prisoner being approved to do so through a risk assessment.

The total number of prisoners in prisons in England and Wales at 30 June 2002 and 30 June 2003 who had been reclassified to a Category D classification during the previous 12 months is shown in the table.

	(i) 30 June 2003	*(ii) 30 June 2002*
Total number of prisoners reclassified as Category D[1]	2,900	2,300

[1] All category D prisoners are re-categorised from category C irrespective of their original classification on entry to prison.

Parole Board

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to improve communication links between the Parole Board of England and Wales and external bodies; what plans he has to enable the Board to have telephone listings independently of the Prison Service; and what plans there are to provide resources to the organisation to enable it to act as an autonomous body [152000]

Paul Goggins: The Parole Board for England and Wales is an independent body and is responsible for developing good links with other agencies within the Criminal Justice System.

The Parole Board only very recently informed officials in the sponsoring unit of the difficulties it was experiencing with the telecommunications service, and that its contact numbers are not independently listed from those of the Prison Service. Now that the sponsoring unit is aware of the problem, it will do all it can to assist the Board with this matter.

The Parole Board already has resources available to it, given as grant-in-aid payments, in order that it can carry out its functions competently and in its capacity as an independent body. The grant-in-aid agreed for the Board for 2003–04 was £4.76 million compared with £3.73 million for 2002–03, which represents a 28 per cent. increase.

Police Statistics (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers, *(b)* special constables and *(c)* community support officers there were in Wales broken down by (i) police force, (ii) constituency and (iii) local authority area for each year since 1997. [151735]

Ms Blears: The tables give the number of police officers and special constables from 1997 to 2003 for each police force area in Wales. Data on Community Support Officers and for territorial areas within police forces were collected for the first time in 2003 by the Research Development and Statistics Directorate. Figures are not available by constituency or local authority area but are available by police force basic command unit (BCU). A table of BCUs in Wales giving police strength for 2002 (collected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) and 2003 is included.

	March 1997	*March 1998*	*March 1999*	*March 2000*	*March 2001*	*March 2002*	*March 2003*[2]
Police Officer Strength[1]							
Dyfed-Powys	1,005	1,002	1,026	1,040	1,055	1,132	1,149
Gwent	1,243	1,233	1,247	1,264	1,274	1,333	1,341
North Wales	1,369	1,396	1,391	1,403	1,444	1,506	1,539
South Wales	2,976	2,986	2,981	2,926	3,154	3,222	3,239
Total	6,592	6,617	6,646	6,632	6,927	7,194	7,268
Special Constables[1]							
Dyfed-Powys	283	254	237	202	191	157	152
Gwent	157	119	113	119	137	142	130
North Wales	341	358	400	247	207	125	133
South Wales	361	366	338	267	254	277	173
Total	1,142	1,097	1,088	835	789	701	588
Community Support Officers[1]							
Dyfed-Powys							0
Gwent							30
North Wales							0
South Wales							0

[1] Full time equivalents
[2] Comparable strength (previously published figures exclude officers on career breaks and maternity leave

Police Force Area	*Basic Command Units*	*March 2002 Police officer strength*	*March 2003 Police officer strength*
Dyfed-Powys	Carmarthenshire	334	331
Dyfed-Powys	Ceredigion	151	153
Dyfed-Powys	Pembrokeshire	234	234
Dyfed-Powys	Powys	254	274
Gwent	Blaenau Gwent	279	131
Gwent	Caerphilly	283	321
Gwent	Newport	295	282
Gwent	Torfaen and Monmouthshire	223	282
North Wales	Central	339	404
North Wales	Eastern	397	437
North Wales	Western	345	380
South Wales	Bridgend	235	254
South Wales	Cardiff	651	805
South Wales	Merthyr Tydfil	142	144
South Wales	Neath and Port Talbot	241	232
South Wales	Rhondda Cynon Taff	363	381
South Wales	Swansea	464	500
South Wales	Vale of Glamorgan	195	220

Prisons

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many seizures of alcohol were made in London prisons in the last 12 months. [151424]

Paul Goggins: The information requested cannot be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to upgrade existing prison cells over the next five years. [151690]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service is currently working to a three year programme of ongoing refurbishment of prison places. At any one time approximately 2,000 places are out of use on account of building refurbishment works. There are also programmes to provide privacy screens in cells that may be used for double occupancy.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list fires started by prisoners in 2003; at which prisons the incidents took place; and what the cost was in each case. [151152]

Paul Goggins: In 2003 there were 980 fires in prisons. The possible cause of 674 (69 per cent.) of these was recorded as malicious ignition.

While many of the fires started by prisoners are dealt with quickly, resulting in little damage, occasionally larger fires do occur and a very small number of these result in serious damage to cells.

The following table shows all establishments and indicates for each, the number of fires that occurred in 2003 for which malicious ignition was recorded as the 'possible cause'.

Figures for the cost in each case is not available.

	Number of fires in 2003 where the 'possible cause' has been recorded as malicious ignition
Askham grange	1
Acklington	0
Albany	4
Altcourse	3
Ashfield	17
Ashwell	2
Aylesbury	3
Bedford	2
Belmarsh	4
Birmingham	6

	Number of fires in 2003 where the 'possible cause' has been recorded as malicious ignition
Blakenhurst	18
Blantyre House	1
Blundeston	4
Brinsford	5
Bristol	8
Brixton	15
Brockhill	12
Buckley Hall	5
Bullingdon	4
Bullwood Hall	3
Camphill	3
Canterbury	0
Cardiff	1
Castington	7
Channings Wood	3
Chelmsford	5
Coldingly	0
Cookham Wood	9
Dartmoor	3
Deerbolt	3
Doncaster	11
Dorchester	0
Dovegate	12
Dover	1
Downview	1
Drake Hall	1
Durham	8
East Sutton Park	6
Eastwood Park	0
Elmley	3
Erlestoke	0
Everthorpe	0
Exeter	2
Featherstone	2
Feltham	13
Ford	0
Forest Bank	17
Foston Hall	1
Frankland	0
Full Sutton	3
Garth	8
Gartree	0
Glen Parva	4
Gloucester	6
Grendon/Springhill	0
Guys Marsh	1
Haslar	2
Hatfield	1
Haverigg	2
Hewell Grange	0
Highdown	6
Highpoint	11
Hindley	23
Hollesley Bay	0
Holloway	11
Holme House	1
Hull	7
Huntercombe	9
Kingston	1
Kirkham	1
Kirklevington Grange	0
Lancaster	1
Lancaster Farms	2
Latchmere House	0
Leeds	6
Leicester	8
Lewes	8
Leyhill	1
Lincoln	5
Lindholme	7
Littlehey	4
Liverpool	13
Long Lartin	2
Low Newton	11
Lowdham Grange	0
Maidstone	3
Manchester	11
Moorland	4
Morton Hall	0
New Hall	9
North Sea Camp	2
Northallerton	3
Norwich	22
Nottingham	11
Onley	6
Parc	29
Parkhurst	7
Pentonville	15
Portland	1
Preston	8
Ranby	5
Reading	0
Risley	8
Rochester	2
Ryehill	2
Send	3
Shepton Mallet	2
Shrewsbury	1
Stafford	2
Standford hill	1
Stocken	1
Stoke Heath	6
Styal	10
Sudbury	0
Swaleside	20
Swansea	1
Swinfen Hall	0
The Verne	1
The Mount	1
Thorn Cross	1
Usk/Prescoed	0
Wakefield	2
Wandsworth	21
Warren Hill	0
Wayland	6
Wealstun	5
Weare	0
Wellingborough	3
Werrington	0
Wetherby	10
Whatton	0
Whitemoor	4
Wincester	7
Wolds	6
Woodhill	2
Wormwood Scrubs	14
Wymott	2
Total	674

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to change the current retirement age of 65 years for serving prison officers. [152710]

Paul Goggins: The current maximum retirement age for serving prison officers is 60 years. A small number of prison officers are retained beyond 60 for exceptional operational reasons.

No decision has been made to extend the retirement age for prison officers, although all options are currently being considered.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers failed their annual control and restraint test in the past 12 months; and what their ages were. [152711]

Paul Goggins: There is no annual control and restraint test in the Prison Service. Prison establishments are required to maintain an appropriate level of officers trained at basic level control and restraint, and those officers selected to fulfil this requirement all undertake initial and refresher training courses. However, these courses do not include a test.

Officers who deal with incidents of concerted indiscipline attend an advanced control and restraint training course. Again, officers are not formally tested at the end of this training. However, to gain admission to the course, an officer must be identified by his or her line manager as having an aptitude for the role; and is required to undertake a fitness test. From 1 January to 31 December 2003, a total of 4,353 officers undertook this fitness test, including officers from private prisons. The overall pass rate was 98.6 per cent, with 62 officers, aged between 18 and 65, failing. Their age distribution was as follows:

Age	*Number of advanced for advanced C and R training who failed the fitness test*
18–25	5
26–34	12
35–44	35
45–54	8
55–65	2

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he intends to fund the prison service in the next *(a)* five and *(b)* 10 years. [150181]

Paul Goggins: The budget plans for the years 2003–04 to 2005–06 are set out in the table. These figures are published in tables 2 and 3 of Section 6 of the Home Office Annual Departmental Report 2003. Both in-year and future year budgets are subject to review and amendment.

Table: Budget Plans for the Prison Service 2003–06

£ millions

Financial year	*Resource budget plans*	*Capital budget plans*
2003–04	2,331.462	294.796
2004–05	2,403.303	268.730
2005–06	2,520.342	166.730

The budgets for years 2006–07 to 2008–09 and beyond are yet to be finalised.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff are employed in the *(a)* Prison Service headquarters and *(b)* National Probation Directorate headquarters. [151422]

Paul Goggins: At the beginning of November 2003 there were 2,403 (full-time equivalent) staff employed at Her Majesty's Prison Service Headquarters (including operational area offices). Of these, 1,330 were employed in central London offices.

In December 2003, the National Probation Directorate employed 445 staff.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list attacks on *(a)* prison officers and *(b)* probation officers in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) prison and (ii) probation service area. [151153]

Paul Goggins: Information regarding assaults on probation officers is not collected centrally, for the previous or the new probation areas, and cannot be obtained except at disproportionate cost. Information on the numbers of assaults on prison officers reported to Prison Service headquarters by prisons is given in the table below, which distinguishes between serious and minor assaults. Serious assaults are shown in column A for each prison and each year with minor assaults being shown in column B. Serious assaults are those that result in detention in outside hospital as an inpatient, medical treatment for concussion or internal injury, fractures, scalds and burns, stabbing, crushing, extensive or multiple bruising, black eye, broken nose, lost or broken tooth, cuts requiring suturing, bites, temporary or permanent blindness or sexual assault. Minor assaults may involve no injury.

Establishment	*A 1999*	*B 1999*	*A 2000*	*B 2000*	*A 2001*	*B 2001*	*A 2002*	*B 2002*	*A 2003*	*B 2003*
Acklington	1	7	0	5	0	1	0	2	1	3
Albany	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	2	0	3
Altcourse	3	16	2	35	3	46	0	45	3	43
Ashfield	0	6	3	79	2	75	4	123	2	62
Ashwell	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Askham Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aylesbury	8	71	1	26	4	31	2	11	2	15
Bedford	1	2	1	6	2	11	4	16	2	12
Belmarsh	4	49	2	63	8	107	7	74	0	52
Birmingham	5	48	1	37	2	50	1	53	2	58
Blakenhurst	3	33	6	40	1	21	0	10	5	22
Blantyre House	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Blundeston	0	3	0	2	0	5	1	2	0	2
Brinsford	1	24	0	38	0	31	1	24	0	31
Bristol	2	24	1	18	1	27	2	48	2	22
Brixton	3	34	2	37	5	31	4	70	4	46
Brockhill	0	9	0	10	0	16	1	12	1	5
Buckley Hall	0	6	0	8	0	8	0	11	1	36

Establishment	A 1999	B 1999	A 2000	B 2000	A 2001	B 2001	A 2002	B 2002	A 2003	B 2003
Bullingdon	2	32	2	18	2	16	1	23	4	22
Bullwood Hall	0	3	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
Camp Hill	2	4	3	7	1	3	4	6	5	10
Canterbury	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	3	1	6
Cardiff	0	5	0	5	0	17	0	14	0	11
Castington	1	51	5	48	0	35	1	52	2	47
Channings Wood	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	3	0	4
Chelmsford	0	9	6	34	3	24	3	22	2	14
Coldingley	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Cookham Wood	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	14
Dartmoor	0	21	0	22	2	30	2	10	0	8
Deerbolt	0	10	0	8	1	11	2	8	0	5
Doncaster	0	42	0	15	0	29	2	30	0	25
Dorchester	0	3	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	4
Dovegate	0	0	0	0	1	7	1	24	5	39
Dover	3	17	1	14	0	7	0	0	5	7
Downview	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	10	1	6
Drake Hall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Durham	2	6	3	14	2	29	2	22	2	29
East Sutton Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastwood Park	1	2	0	5	0	6	0	5	0	11
Edmunds Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9
Elmley	0	11	0	15	1	19	2	23	3	25
Erlestoke	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Everthorpe	0	4	2	2	0	0	0	2	1	2
Exeter	1	4	0	2	2	11	1	12	2	10
Featherstone	0	6	0	8	1	8	2	16	1	7
Feltham	4	43	3	28	3	97	5	82	7	101
Ford	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
Forest Bank	0	0	1	37	2	41	2	37	2	62
Foston Hall	1	3	0	1	0	3	1	28	0	14
Frankland	0	11	1	7	1	5	1	9	0	4
Full Sutton	2	4	0	2	2	10	1	7	2	11
Garth	0	5	1	6	1	2	1	8	0	10
Gartree	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Glen Parva	1	22	1	23	1	25	3	40	1	27
Gloucester	3	17	1	13	2	8	3	10	0	13
Grendon	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guys Marsh	1	3	0	9	1	11	0	1	3	6
Haslar	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hatfield	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Haverigg	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	3	5
Hewell Grange	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Highdown	1	63	3	44	4	47	1	58	2	44
Highpoint South	3	11	1	8	1	32	4	44	3	19
Hindley	1	11	1	6	0	4	0	25	0	23
Hollesley Bay	1	16	5	14	4	22	0	18	0	4
Holloway	13	85	6	155	5	86	1	77	4	86
Holme House	1	8	1	9	0	15	1	13	1	20
Hull	2	19	1	9	3	12	4	13	2	27
Huntercombe	1	10	3	15	1	8	0	15	1	18
Kingston	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Kirkham	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Kirklevington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lancaster Castle	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Lancaster Farms	1	22	2	16	1	18	4	17	3	11
Latchmere House	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leeds	0	57	0	31	2	76	4	56	3	111
Leicester	0	11	1	17	0	15	1	14	0	14
Lewes	2	9	0	12	1	19	1	10	1	32
Leyhill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	1	5	1	6	4	16	0	20	1	14
Lindholme	0	1	0	1	1	3	1	5	2	29
Littlehey	1	13	0	21	1	8	2	5	3	8
Liverpool	1	28	2	20	1	24	2	36	1	44
Long Lartin	0	2	1	4	3	4	1	7	2	5
Lowdham grange	2	17	1	8	0	3	0	4	0	3
Low Newton	0	5	1	16	2	25	0	27	2	16
Maidstone	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	2	1	5
Manchester	2	24	2	37	0	33	0	53	3	56
Moorland	1	26	3	14	1	20	3	20	3	19
Morton Hall	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	4	0	1
New Hall	1	5	0	9	1	30	0	24	0	21

Establishment	A 1999	B 1999	A 2000	B 2000	A 2001	B 2001	A 2002	B 2002	A 2003	B 2003
Northallerton	0	6	1	8	0	4	0	6	0	11
North Sea Camp	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	2
Norwich	3	24	5	21	4	21	2	23	3	23
Nottingham	0	12	1	21	1	16	0	12	0	15
Onley	3	54	0	38	3	60	12	61	7	81
Pare	5	17	0	12	0	15	1	26	2	54
Parkhurst	4	7	1	7	4	18	6	8	2	17
Pentonville	4	78	0	56	2	99	3	102	8	86
Portland	3	6	3	29	3	13	2	21	1	14
Preston	3	8	0	7	2	7	1	10	3	9
Ranby	0	3	1	3	0	1	4	7	1	7
Reading	0	1	1	0	0	4	0	6	1	7
Risley	3	16	0	1	0	1	1	14	1	17
Rochester	3	9	5	17	3	19	1	5	1	14
Rye Hill	0	0	0	0	0	18	1	17	3	19
Send	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	4
Shepton Mallet	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1
Shrewsbury	0	5	0	4	0	3	0	3	0	11
Stafford	3	13	3	9	0	6	1	8	3	8
Standford Hill	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Stocken	0	2	1	6	1	4	0	10	0	9
Stoke Heath	1	20	1	52	1	62	0	47	7	16
Styal	0	12	1	6	0	17	0	4	1	6
Sudbury	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
Swaleside	3	14	3	19	3	27	3	28	5	15
Swansea	1	5	1	1	0	1	0	5	1	5
Swinfen Hall	1	12	0	3	3	12	0	7	1	8
The Mount	0	2	0	2	1	4	0	5	1	13
The Verne	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
The Weare	0	7	2	6	0	2	0	9	2	10
Thorn Cross	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3
Usk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wakefield	2	12	1	6	1	8	0	7	0	7
Wandsworth	4	90	2	49	3	54	3	78	4	66
Warren Hill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wayland	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	7	1	11
Wealstun	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Wellingborough	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	1
Werrington	0	1	1	5	0	8	0	5	1	20
Wetherby	1	7	2	16	1	20	2	8	0	11
Whatton	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Whitemoor	0	8	1	10	2	34	3	22	1	14
Winchester	1	5	2	5	1	4	2	11	0	12
Wolds	1	20	4	27	2	10	0	13	1	7
Woodhill	2	22	0	13	0	9	0	16	1	29
Wormwood Scrubs	1	26	1	21	1	38	2	54	10	35
Wymott	0	7	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	1
Total	145	1671	128	1728	141	2100	151	2262	191	2320

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are in place to ease the problem of prison overcrowding. [148891]

Paul Goggins: Funding has been provided for around 3,000 additional public sector prison places to be built at existing prisons by 2006. Two new private sector prisons providing 1,290 places are also due to be opened at Ashford (near Heathrow) and Peterborough in June 2004 and March 2005 respectively. This will increase the total useable capacity of the prison estate to around 78,700 by 2006.

On the 6 January a radical reform of the management of offenders was announced with the publication of the document 'Reducing Crime-Changing Lives'. The overriding purpose of the reforms is to improve the management of offenders and reduce re-offending. Offenders for whom prison is the right penalty will continue to be sent to prison. But there are many offenders for whom tough non-custodial penalties will be more appropriate. Our proposals will provide sentencers with a full range of penalties and advice on what is most likely to be effective in reducing re-offending in particular circumstances.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the connection between prison and homelessness; and what steps he is taking to ensure that prisoners have help finding accommodation on their release. [148894]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service undertook a large-scale survey in March and April 2003 of sentenced prisoners nearing release. 29 per cent. said they did not have accommodation arranged on release, compared to 33 per cent. in a similar survey undertaken in November and December 2001.

The Prison Service is investing an additional £14.5 million a year in its Custody to Work initiative. This is geared to increasing the number of prisoners securing employment and accommodation on release.

The initiative is helping to support the development and delivery of housing advice and support services in some prisons.

The Government are drawing up a national rehabilitation action plan responding to the July 2002 Social Exclusion Unit report on reducing re-offending by released prisoners. The action plan, which we expect to publish in the early part of this year, will include the development of a national strategy to improve accommodation outcomes for offenders.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the original budget allocations were for HM Prison Brixton for each of the years from 1997 to 2003. [152707]

Paul Goggins: The following table shows the final budget allocations for Brixton for each year between 1997 and 2003. Original budget allocations by establishment are not held beyond the end of each year. Total budget allocations in the three years 1997–2000 were on a cash basis, in 2000–03 they were on a resource basis and in 2000–01 included the budget for property costs (depreciation and interest charges) but these have been excluded from the following figures.

£

	Budget allocations
1997–98	17,490,813
1998–99	17,677,121
1999–2000	17,488,467
2000–01	18,093,685
2001–02	18,311,290
2002–03	18,995,678

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the survey to identify new sites for prisons will be completed. [152703]

Paul Goggins: A survey to identify potential sites for new prisons that are available on the open market commenced last November. The results are currently being analysed and the Prison Service hopes to be in a position to proceed with negotiations for purchase of the most suitable sites later in the spring.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures are in place to ensure that prisons maintain accurate records of foreign national prisoners in the establishment. [151077]

Paul Goggins: As part of the reception procedure in prisons the nationality of all prisoners is recorded in their core record.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much funding the women's foreign national support group Hibiscus received from the Home Office in each year since 1997. [151078]

Paul Goggins: Hibiscus receives money from a variety of sources. The Prison Service has funded Hibiscus's activities since 1998–99. The amounts funded, by various prisons and HQ groups are as follows:

	£
1998–99	20,000
2001–02	54,354
2002–03	54,096
2003–04	80,346

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what special training and guidance is provided for prison officers working in prisons with a large proportion of foreign national prisoners. [151083]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Prison staff are trained to deal with the different needs of all prisoners, including foreign nationals.

The Prison Service recently signed a new contract with Language Line, a 24 hour telephone interpreting service, which is available for prisoners and includes training for staff. A number of prisons holding large numbers of foreign national prisoners work with the voluntary organisation Hibiscus who run training days in their establishments.

In order to ensure that Foreign National prisoners are informed about prison life, Prisoner Information Books are made available in different languages. These are to be replaced by the Foreign Prisoners Resource Pack, which is due to be published soon. This pack will contain a section for staff in prisons to ensure that they are aware of the relevant information.

The Prison Service continues to work in partnership with other agencies to minimise any language or cultural difficulties experienced by foreign national prisoners.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many female prisoners are from Wales, broken down by offences for which they are held; [150466]

(2) how many life sentence prisoners are being held in prisons in England *(a)* whose last place of residence before sentence was in Wales and *(b)* who have requested a transfer to prison in Wales; [150467]

(3) how many young offenders from Wales there were in penal institutions at the latest date for which figures are available; [150469]

(4) how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female prisoners from Wales are held in prison in England, broken down by offences for which they are held; [150471]

(5) how many prisoners there are in each Welsh prison. [150472]

Paul Goggins: Information on a prisoner's place of residence prior to being sentenced/remanded in custody is not held centrally. The information provided as follows cover prisoners on remand who were committed

by courts in Wales and prisoners under sentence who were sentenced by courts in Wales.

Young people are aged under 21 but include some 21-year-olds who were aged 20 or under at conviction who have not been reclassified as part of the adult population.

As at 30 November 2003, there were 179 life sentence prisoners in prisons in England, who were sentenced from courts in Wales. Information is not held centrally on the number of life sentenced prisoners who have requested a transfer to prison in Wales.

As at 30 November 2003, the population of young people in prison in England and Wales included 112 remand prisoners committed by courts in Wales, and 505 sentenced prisoners sentenced by courts in Wales.

The number of male and female prisoners in prison in England, as at 30 November 2003, by offence group, who were committed or sentenced from courts in Wales is given in the tables.

Remand prisoners in prison in England at 30 November 2003, who were committed by courts in Wales by offence and sex

	Female	*Male*
Violence against the person	10	21
Sex offences	2	4
Burglary	2	16
Robbery	2	12
Theft and handling	11	10
Fraud and forgery	0	4
Drug offences	3	19
Other offences	6	16

Sentenced prisoners in prison in England at 30 November 2003, who were sentenced by courts in Wales by offence and sex

	Female	*Male*
Violence against the person	35	355
Sex offences	1	192
Burglary	9	186
Robbery	21	142
Theft and handling	21	73
Fraud and forgery	6	13
Drug offences	30	182
Other offences	17	156
Offence not recorded	0	3

The prison population, as at 30 November 2003, in each prison in Wales is given in the table.

Prison population of prisons in Wales, 30 November 2003

Cardiff	661
Parc	945
Swansea	346
Usk/Prescoed	397

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* adult prisoners, *(b)* young offenders and *(c)* prison spaces there were in each prison in Wales for each year since 1997. [151730]

Paul Goggins: The number of adults and young people in prison, and the operational capacity of each prison from June 1997 to June 2003, is given in the following tables.

Young people are defined as those aged under 21 but include some 21-years-olds who were aged 20 or under at conviction who have not been reclassified as part of the adult population.

Population of adult prisoners at end of June

Establishment	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Cardiff	576	618	581	519	616	644	682
Swansea	252	266	245	230	187	361	360
Usk/Prescoed	258	202	276	278	312	322	374
Parc	0	450	534	468	558	477	543

Population of young people in prison at end of June

Establishment	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Cardiff	145	89	120	1	0	1	0
Swansea	77	59	76	65	0	0	0
Usk/Prescoed	49	23	16	17	17	9	10
Parc	0	244	242	345	360	450	459

Population includes prisoners on authorised absence.

Operational Capacity on the last Friday in June

Establishment	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Cardiff	716	716	722	707	638	669	669
Swansea	350	326	346	346	201	366	368
Usk	187	206	206	211	220	220	242
Prescoed	128	128	128	128	128	128	170
Parc	0	850	920	920	948	968	1,028

Parc prison opened in November 1997.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to whom the Ombudsman for Prisons and Probation will report the findings of his investigations into deaths of *(a)* prisoners, *(b)* probationers and *(c)* detainees in immigration removal centres. [150728]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Details of the new arrangements have yet to be finalised. It is proposed that the Ombudsman will send his reports to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, the relevant Service, the family of the deceased, and the Coroner.

Probation Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evaluation his Department made of the restructuring of the Probation Service following its restructuring in April 2001. [150714]

Paul Goggins: The structural changes introduced under the Criminal Justice Act 2000 and implemented from April 2001 were managed as a change programme overseen by National Director (latterly the Director General) of the National Probation Service (NPS) based within the Home Office.

The strategy for the change programme was set out in a three-year strategic document, "A New Choreography". The Office of Government Commerce independently reviewed the initial programme in October 2001. They commended the restructure and noted early performance improvements. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation has covered issues relevant to restructuring, such as governance, training and race equality, in recent reports.

Service-wide performance improvements have continued and these are monitored in regular NPS performance reports.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of offenders under the management of the Probation Service have been serviced by non-qualified probation personnel over the last 12 months. [150715]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not held centrally.

Offenders may be supervised by a variety of people who deliver both statutory and non-statutory interventions. These will include probation staff and others from partnership agencies. All probation staff who supervise offenders have been assessed and trained for this work. Probation officers and probation service officers have professional qualifications as do specialist staff, such as psychologists.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation field staff were employed in *(a)* Coventry, *(b)* the West Midlands and *(c)* England in each year since 2000. [151190]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 January 2004]*: The information requested is as follows.

Number of Probation Field Staff[1,2]	*31 December 2000*[3]	*31 December 2001*	*31 December 2002*	*30 June 2003*
(a) Coventry	15	17	24	[4]31
(b) West Midlands	541	774	645	706
(c) England and Wales	8,462	9,665	[5]10,439	11,128

[1] Figures include Senior Probation Officers, Senior Practitioners, Probation Officers, Trainee Probation Officers and Probation Service Officers employed in all functions excluding Prisons and Courts.
[2] Figures shown as full time equivalent (FTC)
[3] The figures for December 2000 also exclude those employed within Family Court Welfare. This service transferred during 2001 into Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS).
[4] Information provided by West Midlands Probation Area at 31 December 2003
[5] Figures for December 2002 include Sussex figures at June 2002.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on funding available for the provision of intensive services to offenders on release by the Probation Service. [151192]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The National Probation Service (NPS) is funding or part funding 15 intensive supervision and monitoring schemes (ISMs) which aim to reduce reoffending by persistent offenders. ISMs operate as part of a community sentence or a post custodial licence. Funding was provided for two years by the NPS and the Criminal Justice System Reserve (CJS) which will expire in April 2004. After that areas are expected to have made their own arrangements to fund the projects locally. It is also expected that some continuation funding will be available from the CJS Reserve for an additional year.

Persistent offenders are defined as those who are aged 18 or over and have been convicted of six or more recordable offences in the last year. ISM schemes target the most prolific offenders in a locality. These are the most serious of persistent offenders. Therefore, in addition to six convictions in the last year, those selected will also usually be the target of local police intelligence.

ISM schemes provide intensive surveillance and supervision of offenders, offering fast access to services and support for rehabilitation, alongside swift action and penalties for non-compliance. They incorporate a partnership between police and probation, two agencies that have historically worked in different areas of criminal justice, through the joint aims of apprehending offenders at the same time as addressing offenders' needs. As part of these projects, the police and probation services also work together with other partner agencies such as: providers of housing, education and training, alcohol and drug abuse treatment groups, leisure facilities and employment services.

The ISMs are subject to independent evaluation, which is due to report in spring 2004. A number of areas operate similar schemes to the probation funded ISMs. Plans to deal with persistent offenders will be included as part of the regional resettlement strategies which are to be developed over the next 12 months.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the members of the *(a)* Horserace

Totalisator Board, *(b)* Service Authorities for the National Criminal Intelligence Service and the National Crime Squad, *(c)* Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England and *(d)* Parole Board to the Prison Service were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151812]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is set out in the table and lists the members of the following bodies on 1 January 2004, their term of office and whether they are remunerated. Excluded are data for *(a)* Horserace Totalisator Board as this body is now under the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's remit, and *(b)* Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England, which now falls under Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Body/Member	*Length of term*	*Remunerated*
NCS Service Authority		
Paul Lever	2 years	Yes
Caroline Burton	2 years	Yes
Jennifer Harvey	2 years	Yes
Home Office representative	2 years	No
ACPO[1] representative	4 years	No
ACPO representative	4 years	No
APA[2] representative	4 years	Yes
APA representative	4 years	Yes
HMCE[3] representative	4 years	No
NCIS Service Authority		
Paul Lever	2 years	Yes
Caroline Burton	2 years	Yes
Jennifer Harvey	2 years	Yes
Home Office representative	2 years	No
ACPO representative	4 years	No
APA representative	4 years	Yes
HMCE representative	4 years	No
Head of Serious Crime, Security Service	4 years	No
Scottish representative	4 years	No
Northern Ireland representative	4 years	No
Parole Board		
Janet Lindsay Addyman	6 years 2 months	Yes
Akintunde Akinkunmi	3 years 3 months	Yes
Michael Alcock	3 years 3 months	Yes
Kofi Appiah	6 years 2 months	Yes
Ann Faith Barker	3 years	Yes
Claire Barkley	3 years	Yes
Fiona Barrie	3 years 3 months	Yes
Arnold Barrow	3 years 3 months	Yes
Peter Benson	3 years 3 months	No
Colin Berry	7 years 2 months	Yes
Inigo Bing	3 years 3 months	No
John Boal	3 years	No
Louise Bowers	3 years 3 months	Yes
Sally A. R. Brady	3 years	Yes
David Brown	6 years 3 months	Yes
Mark Brown	3 years 3 months	No
Penny Buller	9 years 3 months	Yes
Sir Alexander Butterfield	3 years	No
John Quentin Campbell	3 years	No
Margaret Carey	6 years 3 months	Yes
Lawrence P. Chesterman	3 years	Yes
Barry Chipchase	3 years 3 months	Yes
Tia Cockrell	6 years 3 months	Yes
Jeremy Connor	6 years 2 months	No
Thomas Cook	6 years 3 months	Yes
Allan Gerald Corless	6 years 3 months	Yes
Graham W. A. Cottle	3 years 3 months	No
Keith Charles Cutler	3 years	No
Susan Lesley Davenport	6 years 2 months	Yes
Jo C. Dobry	3 years	Yes
Paul Dodgson	3 years 3 months	No
Roland Doven	6 years 3 months	Yes
Mark Dyer	3 years 3 months	No
Esmond Faulks	3 years 3 months	No
Mathew Fiander	3 years 3 months	Yes
Peter Fingret	3 years 3 months	No
Giles Charles Forrester	3 years 3 months	No
Diana Fulbrook	3 years	Yes
William Gage	3 years	No
Jane Margaret Geraghty	3 years	Yes
Stephen M. J. Goode CBE	3 years 3 months	Yes
John Keith Harding CBE	3 years 3 months	Yes
W. Gareth Hawkesworth	3 years	No
Michael Philip Hennesse	6 years 2 months	Yes
Debbie Hill	3 years 3 months	Yes
Lesley Hilton	6 years 2 months	Yes
Estelle J. Hindley	6 years 2 months	No
Julia Holman	3 years 3 months	Yes
Trevor J. Hoyland	3 years 3 months	Yes
Judith Caroline Hughes QC	3 years 3 months	No
C. Chris Hunter	3 years	Yes
Kyrie Llinos James	3 years 3 months	Yes
Geoffrey Kamil	6 years 3 months	No
B. Mary Kane	9 years 3 months	Yes
Ardash Kaul	3 years	Yes
Andrew Keen	3 years 3 months	Yes
Ian Keitch	8 years	Yes
Anwar William Khan	6 years 3 months	Yes
Assia King	6 years 2 months	Yes
Roy David King	3 years	Yes
Dora Kohen	6 years 1 month	Yes
Brenda P. M. Large	6 years 3 months	Yes
Timothy Lawrence	6 years 2 months	No
Sarah Lightfoot	3 years 3 months	Yes
Robin James Lipscombe	6 years 3 months	Yes
Rachael Loveridge	3 years 3 months	Yes
Kerry P. M. Macgill	3 years	Yes
Judith M. Mackenzie	6 years 2 months	Yes
Robert B. Mathers	6 years 2 months	Yes
David Charles Mawson	3 years	Yes
Hamish McClelland	8 years 3 months	Yes
Linda E. McHugh	3 years 3 months	Yes
John Graeme McNaught	6 years 2 months	No
Christopher Metcalf	3 years 3 months	No
David Mole	3 years 3 months	No
Anne Molyneux	3 years 3 months	Yes
Angela Montgomery	6 years 3 months	Yes
Heather M. Morgan	6 years 3 months	Yes
David Wynn Morgan	3 years 3 months	No
Steven C. Murphy	3 years	Yes
David Mylan	3 years	Yes
D. E. Paul Nicholson	6 years 3 months	Yes
Richard O'Flynn	3 years	Yes
Richard B. L. Osborn	6 years 3 months	Yes
Tanya Ossack	3 years 3 months	Yes
Sarah Page	3 years 3 months	Yes
Peter Palmer	3 years	Yes
J. Graham Park CBE	8 years 3 months	Yes
Bárbara Ann Parn	3 years 3 months	Yes
Sylvia Peach	3 years	Yes
Anthony Pembrooke	6 years 2 months	Yes
Judith Pitchers	6 years 2 months	Yes
David Philip Pugsley	6 years 2 months	No
Malcolm Rae	3 years 3 months	Yes
Alistair John Reeve	6 years 3 months	Yes
Steven Robbins	3 years	No
John Mervyn Roberts	3 years 3 months	No
Andrew F. Rutherford	3 years	Yes
John Sadiik	9 years 3 months	Yes
Gwyneth Ann Sampson	3 years 3 months	Yes
Audrey O. H. Sander	6 years 3 months	No
Girish Chander Shetty	9 years 3 months	Yes
Alan Douglas Smith	3 years 3 months	Yes
James Spencer QC	3 years 3 months	No
John Wilfred Staples	6 years 2 months	Yes
Nigel A. Stone	9 years 3 months	Yes
Margaret Stone	3 years 3 months	Yes
Marion Swan	6 years 3 months	Yes
Barbara Swyer	3 years 3 months	Yes
Diana Tamlyn	7 years 1 month	Yes
Kay Christina Terry	3 years 3 months	Yes
Anthony Thornton QC	3 years 3 months	No
Lynne D. Tolan	6 years 3 months	Yes
Jo M. Turnbull	3 years	Yes
Susan Vivian-Byrne	3 years 3 months	Yes
Helen Ward	3 years 3 months	Yes
Brian Watling QC	3 years 3 months	No
Mollie Jane Weatheritt	6 years	Yes
Tessa West	6 years 3 months	Yes
Alan Keith Whiffen	6 years 3 months	Yes

Body/Member	Length of term	Remunerated
Richard G. Whitfield	6 years 3 months	Yes
Peter Wilshaw	6 years 3 months	Yes
Simon Wood	6 years 2 months	Yes
Anne J. Worall	3 years	Yes
Yaa F. Yeboah	3 years 3 months	Yes

[1] Association of Chief Police Officers.
[2] Association of Police Authorities.
[3] HM Customs and Excise.

Rehabilitation Programmes

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which rehabilitation programmes have been the most effective in reducing the reconviction rate; and what plans he has to extend these programmes to all prisons. [148907]

Paul Goggins: Prisoners are imprisoned for many different kinds of offences, ranging widely in character and seriousness. No one programme is likely to be effective in reducing re-offending on the part of all offenders. The Correctional Services Accreditation Panel accredits programmes which are based on the international evidence about what is likely to be effective in reducing re-offending. Cognitive skills programmes, sex offender treatment programmes, drug treatment programmes and therapeutic communities have all been accredited, as well as programmes designed to address violent offending and domestic violence specifically. These interventions are subject to ongoing evaluation, including research into their impact on reconviction rates.

Over 100 prison establishments currently run accredited programmes and although the overall number is increasing there are no plans at present to extend them to every prison, as they are not suitable for all prisoners, particularly those serving short sentences. All prison establishments, however, are required to provide constructive regimes which address offending behaviour, improve educational and work skills and promote law abiding behaviour in custody and after release. Other activities which support rehabilitation and address prisoners' resettlement needs include learning and skills, prison work, involvement in pre-release programmes, housing advice and support services, Jobcentre Plus prison surgeries and job search training and support.

The establishment of a new single National Offender Management Service will focus on reducing re-offending and equipping offenders to turn away from crime. Regional offender managers will, in the future, be responsible for commissioning offender management services and interventions to reduce re-offending.

Risk of Sexual Harm Orders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many risk of sexual harm orders have been issued. [150331]

Paul Goggins: The Sexual Offences Act 2003, which provided for the risk of sexual harm orders, is not due to come into force until May 2004. As a result no risk of sexual harm orders have yet been made.

Sentences

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on changes in sentence lengths since 1991. [150350]

Paul Goggins: Information on trends in sentencing is contained in chapter 4 of Criminal statistics, England and Wales, 2002 (Cm 6054) published in December 2003.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are taken to ensure consistency of sentencing practice. [150354]

Paul Goggins: The recent Criminal Justice Act 2003 created the Sentencing Guidelines Council. The purpose of the council is to produce robust and comprehensive sentencing guidelines. By providing an important bridge between what legislation provides and how that legislation is used, the guidelines will assist the courts in their task of effecting consistent and just disposals in all cases.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will ask the Sentencing Guidelines Council to consider reducing overall sentencing lengths for offences not involving violence, drugs or sexual matters. [152752]

Paul Goggins: It is the role of the Sentencing Guidelines Council to issue guidance on all aspects of sentencing so as to promote consistent and just sentencing by the courts within the framework provided by Parliament. The guidance will be issued following an evaluation period and will be proportionate in severity to the nature of the offence.

It will be for the Council to make its proposals, and there will be opportunities for criminal justice professionals, the public and Parliament to make their views known to the Council. While no type of criminal behaviour can be condoned or minimised, the Home Secretary has made clear that custody should be reserved for serious offenders.

Serious Criminal Offenders (Travel)

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were charged with serious criminal offences and allowed to travel outside in each of the last five years. [150802]

Paul Goggins: This information is not held centrally.

Sex Abuse Guidelines

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when the updated guidelines on anonymity for those accused of historical sex abuse were sent to police forces; [148881]

(2) what the terms of guidelines on anonymity for those accused of historical sex abuse *(a)* were before and *(b)* are since recent amendments were put into effect. [148882]

Paul Goggins: The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has amended its guidelines to all police forces to give greater prominence to the rules that govern the release of information about anyone suspected of, but not yet charged with, an offence. The

guidance underlines that suspects should not be named before charge and goes on to highlight the possible dangers of doing so, in that not only is there the risk of causing irreparable damage to a suspect's reputation, but also that unwarranted disclosure could leave a force open to civil proceedings. Updated guidance was sent to all police forces via the ACPO intranet in October 2003 and may be viewed on www.acpo.police.uk. We have asked that a copy of previous guidance be sent to my hon. Friend.

Speeding

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his plans for increases in fines for drivers caught speeding; and how the extra money raised will help victims of *(a)* crime and *(b)* road traffic accidents. [149095]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 January 2004]:* I would refer my hon. Friend to the Written Ministerial Statement made by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 18WS. This announced the publication of a consultation paper entitled 'Compensation and Support for Victims of Crime', which set out proposals to provide a wide range of support for victims of crime and to amend the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

A central plank of the proposals was to make all offenders pay for their crimes and to help all victims.

One of the key proposals was to add a surcharge to all criminal convictions, and to fixed penalty notices for criminal offences. The surcharge would be additional to the fine or any other penalty imposed, and would be payable by those who were convicted of a criminal offence, those who receive a penalty notice for disorder, and those who receive a fixed penalty notice for a road traffic offence, including drivers breaking the law by speeding.

The money raised through the surcharge would go into a new Victims' Fund, as would monies raised in the other ways described in the consultation paper. The money from that fund would be spent directly on services for victims of crime including, for example, victims of rape and sexual assault, victims of domestic violence and hate crime, and the many seriously injured victims of road traffic incidents and the bereaved relatives of victims.

We welcome comment on all the ideas and proposals set out in the consultation paper. Subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise, we propose to legislate to make the changes, where necessary, through amendments to the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill currently before Parliament.

Wetherby Young Offenders Institution

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 762W, on HMYOI Wetherby, what the reasons were for the increase in *(a)* costs per prisoner and *(b)* cost per prisoner place at HMYOI Wetherby. [151131]

Paul Goggins: Baseline funding for HMYOI Wetherby has risen from £6.7 million in 1998–99 to £10.2 million in 2002–03. The change from cash to resource based accounting over this period reflects part of this increase, but the major structural and regime changes at HMYOI Wetherby following its re-role to a juvenile only establishment have been the main reason for increased funding. This increase has led to a greatly improved regime generating improved numeracy and literacy among prisoners, better opportunities for training and employment, increased employability through practical and vocational activities and the addressing of offending behaviour issues.

Women Prisoners

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women prisoners there are; and how many are imprisoned for offences relating to drugs. [145289]

Paul Goggins: The number of females in prison in England and Wales on 30 January 2004 was 4,378.

At the end of May 2003 (the most recent published data covering the detail required to answer the question) there were 176 females on remand for drugs offences and 1,318 females under sentence for drugs offences, out of a total female population of 4,495.

Written Answers to Questions

The following question was answered on 9 February 2004

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the office and the agencies for which the Office is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150259]

Mr. Alexander: The breakdown requested is shown for all departments in the following tables. Some departments and agencies have changed names and/or structure following Machinery of Government changes between the two dates.

The numbers and totals are rounded to the nearest ten from the raw data. Any numbers less than five are represented by "..", whereas entries in the tables represented by "—" signify no data.

Permanent staff in post by Department and responsibility level as at 1 January 1997 and 1 April 2003

1 April 2003 *Headcount*

Department	*SCS Level*	*Grade 6*	*Grade 7*	*SEO*	*HEO*	*EO*	*AO*	*AA*	*Other*	*Total*
Cabinet Office	190		420	70	430	380	370	110	—	1,960
COI	10	10	40	120	100	50	30	10	—	360
Security and Intelligence Services	30	60	200	620	1,210	1,740	680	150	—	4,690
DCMS	30	20	80	130	..	120	100	—	—	480
MOD	190	280	900	2,020	4,810	6,290	9,060	6,670	10,740	40,950
Royal Fleet Auxiliary	—	60	110	190	110	50	—	—	1,990	2,500
Armed Forces Personnel Admin Agency	..	..	10	20	50	50	40	10	—	180
Army Base Repair Organisation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,000	2,000
Army Trng. & Rec. Agency	..	20	30	100	470	1,210	1,080	480	980	4,370
Army Personnel Centre	—	..	..	10	80	120	470	150	..	830
Defence Analytical Services Agency	..	..	20	10	30	70	10	..	—	150
DARA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4,120	4,120
Defence Bills Agency	..	—	..	10	30	110	380	100	..	630
Def Comms and Services Agency	..	20	80	310	680	1,030	640	200	250	3,220
Defence Dental Agency	—	..	30	..	10	20	80	30	10	170
Defence Estates	10	40	150	330	260	280	290	70	120	1,530
Defence Science and Tech. Lab.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,090	3,090
Def Geog Img Intel Agency	—	..	20	70	200	230	190	60	40	800
DHE	..	..	20	60	110	280	340	20	60	890
Defence Intel and Security Centre	—	—	10	10	30	20	40	30	20	140
British Forces Post Office	—	—	..	..	10	60	70	210	30	380
DPA	40	100	330	1,060	1,060	490	480	150	90	3,800
DSDA	..	10	10	60	200	620	540	220	2,880	4,530
Defence Trnspt and Mvmnts Agency	—	—	..	..	20	30	100	10	140	290
Defence Vetting Agency	..	..	..	10	130	30	70	50	—	290
Disposal Services Agency	..	—	..	10	20	20	20	..	—	70
Duke of Yorks Royal Military School	—	..	..	..	50	..	20	..	20	110
Met Office	—	—	—	—	..	..	—	—	2,130	2,130
MOD Police		..	20	40	220	550	2,650	50	30	3,560
Naval Manning Agency	—	—	..	..	20	10	50	20	—	110
Naval Recruitment and Training Agency	..	..	20	60	120	340	170	190	160	1,060
Pay and Personnel Agency	..	..	10	20	60	170	370	100	..	730
Queen Victoria School	—	—	..	..	30	10	10	10	10	70
RAF Personnel Mngmnt Agency	—	—	..	..	10	30	110	70	—	220
RAF Training Group Defence Agency	—	—	30	40	380	510	430	380	300	2,080
Service Childrens Education	..	..	30	80	550	30	20	—	—	720
UK Hydrographic Office	—	—	—	..	—	—	—	..	960	960
Veterans Agency	..	20	10	20	50	270	330	170	—	880
DMETA	10	..	10	20	60	100	170	140	160	650
Warship Support Agency	10	50	180	540	1,010	1,100	1,040	660	650	5,240
ODPM	130	80	470	300	640	680	560	90	—	2,940
DfES	130	100	630	680	1,310	1,270	890	210	—	35,220
DEFRA	160	120	500	780	1,470	1,440	1,770	690	10	6,940
Central Science Laboratory	..	20	60	70	140	170	170	40	..	670
CEFAS	..	20	30	80	110	140	160	20	—	560
Pesticide Safety Directorate	..	..	20	30	60	30	30	20	—	180
Veterinary Laboratories Agency	..	20	50	140	120	240	470	320	—	1,360
Veterinary Medicines Directorate	..	..	10	20	10	20	40	10	—	120
Home Office	180	230	660	1,110	2,410	6,300	4,140	2,140	20	17,180
Charity Commission	10	—	40	60	140	180	110	40	—	580
HM Prison Service	70	180	470	2,160	530	4,570	7,370	25,810	2,970	44,110
Crown Prosecution Service	50	170	390	1,780	910	1,590	1,700	850	—	7,440
Legal Secretariat	10	10	..	..	..	..	10	..	—	30
Treasury Solicitors Department	50	120	130	50	30	80	60	20	..	540
CPSI	..	10	..	..	10	..	10	—	—	40
DCA	90	80	270	290	530	380	290	50	—	1,980
Court Service	20	30	130	190	970	2,030	4,790	2,100	—	10,250
Public Guardianships Office	..	10	10	80	30	110	50	10	—	310
HM Land Registry	40	190	160	430	1,850	3,340	2,440	490	—	8,940

Permanent staff in post by Department and responsibility level as at 1 January 1997 and 1 April 2003

1 April 2003 — *Headcount*

Department	*SCS Level*	*Grade 6*	*Grade 7*	*SEO*	*HEO*	*EO*	*AO*	*AA*	*Other*	*Total*
Department of Trade and Industry	250	280	690	440	1,180	950	930	190	70	4,970
Companies House	..	..	20	30	80	390	540	280	—	1,130
Employment Tribunals Service	..	..	10	30	20	130	530	—	—	720
Insolvency Service	..	10	60	160	370	200	510	170	..	1,490
Nat Weights and Measures Lab	..	..	10	10	20	10	10	..	—	60
Patent Office	30	10	110	110	280	110	280	110	—	1,020
Radiocommunications Agency	10	20	30	60	140	190	130	20	—	590
SBS	10	20	40	20	70	50	50	10	—	270
ACAS	10	20	50	200	310	190	120	..	—	900
ECGD	20	10	60	40	100	70	60	20	—	390
DVLA	..	30	40	110	310	660	2,600	1,920	—	5,660
DSA	..	10	20	30	130	1,530	140	370	—	2,220
Highways Agency	30	50	200	590	180	370	300	30	—	1,750
Planning Inspectorate	10	200	100	40	70	110	140	60	..	740
Vehicle Certification Agency	..	—	10	20	30	10	30	10	—	110
Vehicle Inspectorate	..	10	30	90	230	1,280	540	200	160	2,530
Health and Safety Executive	50	130	630	1,290	620	530	1,020	—	—	4,260
OFWAT	10	10	10	100	..	10	100	—	—	240
OS	10	20	50	160	350	930	260	—	10	1,780
DfT	80	30	270	220	420	400	450	70	—	1,940
HM Treasury	90	—	270	340	—	140	170	20	..	1,040
Customs and Excise	100	140	400	1,760	5,340	7,950	5,510	1,750	..	22,950
GAD	30	..	10	..	30	10	10	..	—	100
Inland Revenue	270	1,000	1,930	2,430	6,930	16,730	32,240	17,070	..	78,610
Valuation Office	10	80	300	790	880	900	300	970	..	4,230
ONS	40	30	240	230	650	810	1,140	330	..	3,470
Royal Mint	..	10	10	20	120	60	80	10	500	810
DWP	130	190	600	860	2,240	5,420	7,580	3,170	—	20,190
Child Support Agency	10	20	60	110	470	2,760	7,680	1,240	—	12,360
Pension Services	20	50	60	180	730	4,740	10,780	1,460	—	18,000
Northern Ireland Office	30	—	30	10	40	40	30	30	—	190
Privy Council Office	..	—	..	—	..	10	10	..	—	30
Scottish Executive	180	—	630	—	—	2,190	1,500	—	—	4,500
Fisheries Research Services	..	—	30	—	..	200	100	—	—	330
HM Inspectorate of Education	10	—	80	—	—	10	60	—	—	160
Scottish Agricultural Scientific Agency	..	—	20	..	—	60	60	—	—	140
Scottish Courts Service	..	10	20	70	90	250	290	280	—	1,000
Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency	..	—	30	—	—	150	60	—	30	270
Scottish Prison Service	10	10	30	80	680	2,050	1,410	260	..	4,530
Scottish Office Pensions Agency	..	—	..	—	—	60	180	—	—	240
Student Awards Agency Scotland	—	..	..	—	—	30	100	—	—	130
Crown Office and PFS	50	30	110	250	180	140	700	..	—	1,450
General Register Office [Scotland]	..	..	10	—	—	100	120	—	—	220
National Archive for Scotland	..	—	10	—	—	50	90	—	—	150
Office SOS for Scotland	10	—	30	—	—	30	40	—	—	100
Registers of Scotland	..	—	30	60	270	440	360	210	—	1,370
National Assembly for Wales	90	40	270	290	750	840	840	370	10	3,500
Cadw	..	..	10	10	20	40	90	10	50	230
OHMCI	..	50	—	..	10	10	10	..	—	90
Wales Office	..	..	10	..	10	10	10	10	..	50

Source:

Data has been extracted from Mandate with exception of Cabinet Office which is separately supplied.

Permanent staff in Post by Department and Responsibility Level as at 1 January 1997 and 1 April 2003

1 January 1997 — *Headcount*

Department	*SCS Level*	*Grade 6*	*Grade 7*	*SEO*	*HEO*	*EO*	*AO*	*AA*	*Other*	*Total*
Cabinet Office	100	50	220	120	220	420	480	260	20	1,890
Security and Intelligence Services	30	40	150	400	960	2,020	910	530	—	5,030
DCMS	20	10	50	90	..	70	70	30	..	340
MAFF	100	110	300	590	850	1,260	1,600	1,300	120	6,230
ADAS	20	30	150	360	470	170	360	30	90	1,670
Pesticide Safety Directorate	..	..	20	30	60	40	20	20	—	200
Veterinary Laboratories Agency	..	10	40	120	80	160	340	270	..	1,020
Veterinary Medicines Directorate	..	..	20	20	10	20	20	20	—	100
IBAP	10	..	20	40	110	220	420	130	—	960
Home Office	110	60	410	490	1,350	3,490	1,890	1,260	60	9,150
Forensic Science Service	..	10	70	130	160	170	240	90	—	860
Passport Records Agency	..	..	10	10	50	170	600	690	—	1,530
HM Prison Service	70	160	460	660	1,090	3,970	24,500	5,260	2,820	39,000
Crown Prosecution Service	50	170	540	1,360	390	1,330	1,340	850	..	6,030
Legal Secretariat	10	..	..	—	..	..	10	..	—	20
Treasury Solictors Department	40	60	80	20	30	60	60	20	..	380
Government Property Lawyers (TSOL)	10	20	20	10	10	20	30	10	—	110
LCD	40	30	90	70	190	210	190	80	..	880
Court Service	20	20	110	220	730	1,940	4,710	2,160	—	9,920

Permanent staff in Post by Department and Responsibility Level as at 1 January 1997 and 1 April 2003

1 January 1997 *Headcount*

Department	*SCS Level*	*Grade 6*	*Grade 7*	*SEO*	*HEO*	*EO*	*AO*	*AA*	*Other*	*Total*
Public Guardianships Office	..	10	10	30	90	170	190	60	—	560
HM Land Registry	30	140	50	290	550	2,340	3,250	1,830	—	8,470
Public Record Office	..	..	20	40	50	80	120	130	..	440
Department. of Trade and Industry	210	110	640	360	970	1,060	1,350	570		5,270
Companies House	10	—	10	20	60	130	350	350	—	930
Insolvency Service	..	10	60	110	350	210	360	240	—	1,340
Nat Weights and Measures Lab	..	—	..	10	10	10	10	..	—	50
Patent Office	30	10	140	80	50	140	190	120	—	740
Radiocommunications Agency	10	10	30	60	100	180	90	50	—	520
ACAS	10	10	20	110	220	60	150	30	—	590
ECGD	10	..	40	30	90	100	80	50	30	440
Office of Fair Trading	10	..	50	20	70	110	90	50	—	400
OFGAS	10	..	10	10	20	30	10	10	—	100
OFER	10	..	30	10	50	50	50	30	—	240
DOE (exc. PSA)	130	60	450	270	600	700	760	290	—	3,270
Building Research Estab	10	20	110	150	—	170	110	60	..	630
DVLA	..	20	20	40	150	400	1,570	1,630	..	3,830
DSA	..	..	10	20	130	1,450	130	460	—	2,200
Fire Service College	..	..	10	10	30	20	40	30	50	180
Highways Agency	30	40	180	330	270	340	370	110	..	1,670
QEII Conference Centre	..	..	..	10	..	10	20	10	—	60
Vehicle Inspectorate	—	..	20	50	150	720	210	240	200	1,580
Health and Safety Executive	90	130	580	1,100	450	430	830	560	—	4,160
OFWAT	10	10	10	10	30	50	50	20	—	190
HM Treasury	80	10	160	250	—	130	250	70	..	950
National Investment and Loans Office	..	—	..	..	10	10	10	..	—	30
GCIS (CCTA)	..	10	30	50	30	20	30	..	..	170
GAD	30	..	..	..	20	10	10	..	—	80
Inland Revenue	220	750	1,850	1,500	5,170	11,710	17,900	14,030	—	53,120
Contributions Agency	..	10	40	100	420	2,200	3,330	1,610	—	7,710
Valuation Office	20	130	290	730	660	790	790	1,140	—	4,550
ONS	30	20	160	170	470	750	1,060	420	..	3,080
Registry of Friendly Societies	10	10	20	20	20	40	40	20	..	170
Royal Mint	10	10	10	20	100	100	100	30	620	990
Department of Social Security	80	60	200	150	520	560	760	510	—	2,830
Benefits Agency	20	280	190	480	2,550	19,160	42,830	13,390	—	78,900
Child Support Agency	..	10	30	90	350	2,170	4,330	990	—	7,960
IT Services Agency	10	20	80	240	490	650	450	70	—	2,000
Northern Ireland Office	20	..	20	10	30	40	40	50	—	210
Privy Council Office	..	—	..	..	..	10	10	..	—	30
Lord Advocates Department	10	..	—	—	..	..	10	..	—	20
Crown Office and PFS	50	210	..	10	50	150	250	390	20	1,140
Registers of Scotland	..	..	20	50	190	430	210	230	..	1,140
National Assembly for Wales	60	20	130	110	280	470	480	420	20	1,990
Cadw	..	..	10	10	20	30	40	10	60	180
OHMCI	10	30	..	..	—		10	..	—	60

Source:
The data have been extracted from Mandate with the exception of Cabinet Office data which are an estimate based on historical unpublished data.

Tuesday 10 February 2004

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Church Repairs (VAT)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners whether a Church of England cathedral entering into bankruptcy can reclaim VAT paid on church repairs. [152995]

Sir Stuart Bell: Under the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme—whose extension until March 2006 the Church of England and other UK faith groups welcome—listed churches and cathedrals can recover the equivalent of 12.5 per cent. on the cost of repairs carried out to those buildings after April 2001, in effect reducing the VAT burden to 5 per cent. The grant scheme makes no special provision in respect of bankruptcy.

On the question of the interaction of the bankruptcy laws and the law relating to charitable corporations such as cathedrals, I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for the City of York (Mr. Bayley) on 2 February 2004.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her best estimate is of the staff time costs in replacing stolen, lost and damaged traps used in the operational Krebs triplets areas. [153925]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible to quantify the staff input into individual components of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial.

For the average number of field staff employed in operations associated with the culling trial, and total cost of the Wildlife Unit by financial year, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1366W.

Fallen Stock

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost to farmers in Lancashire for disposal of fallen cattle stock will be. [153442]

Mr. Bradshaw: No assessment has been made of costs to Lancashire farmers. However, we recognise that many livestock farmers will face increased costs as a result of the ban on on-farm burial of fallen stock. That is why the Government and the farming industry are working together to set up a voluntary low cost national scheme which will assist farmers in meeting those costs.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how long the subsidy for the removal of fallen stock will last. [153443]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra and the devolved Administrations will subsidise the National Fallen Stock Scheme on a digressive basis for its first three years of operation only. Thereafter, the scheme will be expected to be self-financing.

Fish (Toxic Chemicals)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what tests are carried out and with what regularity for the accumulation of toxic chemicals in *(a)* fresh water fish, *(b)* saltwater fish and *(c)* shellfish landed in England. [153112]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department does not carry out regular testing for the accumulation of toxic chemicals in landed fish and shellfish. However, the Food Standards Agency carries out periodic surveys of species of fish and shellfish used as food, taken from retail sources, markets or from producers. Analysis for contaminants such as organic chemicals and metals is undertaken as the need arises.

The Environment Agency and CEFAS[1] carry out monitoring under the National Maritime Monitoring Programme (NMMP) of marine fish and shellfish for a number of hazardous substances. These include regular monitoring for lead, mercury, cadmium, organochlorines and pesticide residues, and special surveys on particular substances of concern where information is needed. In addition the Agency monitors shellfish waters and shellfish in accordance with the requirements of the Shellfish Waters Directive (79/923) for a similar range of hazardous substances, PCBs and faecal coliform levels. The Environment Agency does not routinely monitor freshwater fish for toxic chemicals but it does commission reports in response to identified areas of particular concern.

[1] Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the effect on younger fish in a fishery where the stocks are significantly below the optimum economic carrying capacity of a relatively high proportion of large cod, where all other factors are constant. [150919]

Mr. Bradshaw: The effect of this factor is likely to be very small, because the proportion of large cod in the North Sea cod stock is actually very low, and large cod do not usually compete with small cod for the same species or size of food organisms, so that releasing adult food does not necessarily benefit small fish.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what escape behaviour *(a)* haddock and *(b)* whiting exhibit to avoid towing gear. [150090]

Mr. Bradshaw: Most fish (including haddock and whiting) tend to be herded to the mouth of the net. Once at or near to the mouth of the trawl the fish turn and swim in the same direction as the trawl for a period of time.

When a fish becomes tired it usually will fall back into the trawl cod end. In falling back into the trawl, haddock tend to rise upwards as well as backwards. Whiting also tend to rise up when falling back but not as far as haddock.

Many fish will also swim for a period inside the cod end. Both whiting and haddock will actively try and escape through large meshes or escape panels if they are fitted in or near to the cod end and if the fish have the energy to do so.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the ground gear specifications are for a GOV trawl. [150121]

Mr. Bradshaw: The GOV trawl is a general purpose trawl with a high headline of 5–6 metres. The design, specification and operation of the GOV trawl are agreed internationally and co-ordinated by International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the relationship is between the size of herring stocks and the health of cod fisheries in the North Sea, with reference to *(a)* the fishing effort directed at and *(b)* stock levels of sand eels. [150476]

Mr. Bradshaw: The North Sea herring stock collapsed because of the very high rate of fishing by the unregulated herring fishery in the 1960s, but recovered quite rapidly when the fishery was closed. The herring collapsed well before the principal increase in sandeel fishing effort. The main factor in the decline of the cod stock since the 1970s is the high fishing rate on cod, coupled with reduced cod recruitment since the 1980s. This occurred during a period when sandeel abundance fluctuated but did not decline.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the safety implications arising from the designation of the restricted fishing area in the North Sea in respect of vessels being required to dump haddock catch when they enter the area to avoid bad weather. [152168]

Mr. Bradshaw: The cod protection area established at the December 2003 Council does not cover waters within 12 miles of the coast and thus excludes the areas in which vessels in bad weather are mostly likely to seek refuge; any vessels with a special haddock permit that do seek refuge in the offshore cod protection area will be required to cease their fishing activities until they have left the area again, but they will not be required to dump their haddock catch.

Poultry Imports

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many EU countries refuse to import infected chicken, broken down by disease; what plans the UK has to ban the import of infected chickens; and what measures she is taking to ensure that no infected chickens are imported into the UK. [153122]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under EU law neither chickens nor chicken meat infected with any disease to which poultry is susceptible may be imported into any member state. All chickens and chicken meat imported into the EU must undergo veterinary checks at an approved Border Inspection Post before import is allowed, to ensure that the import requirements have been complied with.

In view of the outbreaks of Avian Influenza in several South Asian countries, the Government have, as an additional precaution, specifically banned import from all the affected countries of all live birds, unprocessed poultry meat (other than poultry meat from Thailand certified as produced from animals slaughtered before 1 January 2004), and other bird products capable of transmitting the avian influenza virus.

Ridgeway

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost of introducing a single Traffic Restriction Order (TRO) for all those parts of the whole Ridgeway where she and the relevant local authorities have agreed that such a TRO would be appropriate; and what estimate she has made of the total cost were each local authority to impose a separate TRO for its own section of the Ridgeway. [154378]

Alun Michael: The costs of Traffic Regulation Orders vary considerably depending on the number and type of objections and whether public inquiries are held. The costs of introducing a single Traffic Regulation Order, as opposed to individual Traffic Regulation Orders on the Ridgeway, cannot be estimated with any certainty. In any event, we think it right that responsibility for such Orders rests generally with local authorities.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bangladesh

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Bangladesh over the persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in that country; and if he will make a statement. [153522]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We are concerned about the situation of Ahmadiyya Muslims in Bangladesh, and raise this regularly with the Bangladeshi Government. I discussed the issue with the High Commissioner for Bangladesh in London on 22 January. I also met representatives of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association (UK) on 29 January to hear their concerns. Our High Commissioner in Dhaka raised the issue with the State Minister for Foreign Affairs on 22 and 30 December 2003, and the EU troika raised it with the State Minister on 23 December 2003. Our High Commission in Dhaka is monitoring the situation closely, and we will continue to raise the issue when appropriate.

Boulos Rezek-Allah

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Egyptian Foreign Minister and *(b)* the Egyptian Ambassador to the Court of St. James's in connection with the treatment of Mr. Boulos Rezek-Allah. [153305]

Mr. Rammell: None. However officials from the British Embassy in Cairo have discussed religious issues with the Coptic Church in Egypt and raised our concerns with the Egyptian authorities where appropriate.

Eritrea

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation of Christians in Eritrea, with particular reference to Evangelicals. [153995]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned about the restrictions on religious freedom in Eritrea. I raised this issue most recently with the government of Eritrea during my visit to Asmara from 13 to 14 January. I also raised it with the Eritrean Foreign Minister and the Eritrean Ambassador in London last December. Our Ambassador in Asmara raises the issue regularly, both bilaterally and in conjunction with our EU partners.

EU Enlargement

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage the EU to negotiate with *(a)* Ukraine and *(b)* Russia in relation to loss of markets arising from accession of the 10 new member states. [153791]

Mr. MacShane: We expect that Russian and Ukrainian exporters will benefit significantly from access to the markets of the enlarged EU and that Russia and Ukraine will experience an overall increase in levels of trade.

The EU has regular meetings with Russia and Ukraine within the framework of the EU/Russia and EU/Ukraine Partnership and Co-operation Agreements. Both Russia and Ukraine have raised the matter of trade relations with the enlarged EU during recent talks, and the EU has undertaken to address their concerns in this area.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which EU member states have agreed to unrestricted admission of workers from the newly joining states from May. [153003]

Mr. MacShane: After Accession on 1 May, nationals from the 10 new EU member states will be able to travel freely throughout the EU. However, except for nationals of Malta and Cyprus, they will not automatically be allowed to work in the existing member states. Those existing member states may open their labour markets to nationals from the new member states if they so choose. The Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, Denmark and the UK have said that they will do this.

Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands have subsequently set out certain conditions for workers for accession states to enjoy this freedom. In the case of Sweden and the Netherlands these proposals remain under discussion and have yet to be implemented.

Italy and Portugal have yet to decide whether, when or how to grant free movement of workers from the new member states.

We are right to open up the UK labour market to those who genuinely want to come here and work. It makes sense for citizens of the new member states to be able to work and contribute to our economy and pay taxes. They will expand the range of skills and supply of workers in the UK economy; and be able to work here legally, paying taxes and national insurance, not confined to the black market.

As stated in the Explanatory Memorandum for the European Union (Accessions) Act 2003 (Command Paper 5805), safeguards are available if in the event that there are "disturbances to the labour market which could seriously threaten the standard of living or level of employment in a given region or occupation".

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the areas where the Government has identified an inaccurate or false declaration by the former Iraqi Government in the declaration on its proscribed weapons of mass destruction programmes submitted to the United Nations Security Council on 7 December 2002, specifying the page number in each case. [152311]

Mr. MacShane: A careful examination of Iraq's declaration was undertaken in December 2002 and January 2003 and its contents were compared with the outstanding disarmament issues reported by UNSCOM upon their withdrawal from Iraq and against intelligence assessments available at the time. The results of this examination showed that there was no new information contained in the declaration, and that it therefore failed to address any of the outstanding issues. This failure was borne out by subsequent discoveries by UNMOVIC inspection teams in early 2003, and later by the Iraq Survey Group.

The Iraqi Declaration itself remains a document confidential to the United Nations Security Council. It would not, therefore, be appropriate to go into the detail of the specific contents of any part of the declaration. Huge quantities of documents remain to be translated.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the *(a)* content and *(b)* implications of the resignation speech of Dr. David Kay as the leader of the Iraq Survey Group. [152317]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has announced that an inquiry will be instigated to look into the question of the intelligence received concerning Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and how it was interpreted. Dr. Kay's statement will clearly be of interest to the inquiry.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the legal personality is of the Coalition Provisional Authority; and if he will make a statement. [152339]

Mr. Straw: As noted in Security Council Resolution 1483 of 22 May 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was established to exercise the specific authorities, responsibilities and obligations under international law of the occupying powers. The authority of the CPA is set out in CPA Regulation No. 1, copies of which will be placed in the Library of the House.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what capacity and on whose behalf UK secondees to the Coalition Provisional Authority are acting; who pays their *(a)* salaries and *(b)* expenses; to whom they are answerable for their activities; and if he will make a statement. [152340]

Mr. Straw: Staff seconded by HMG to the Coalition Provisional Authority are working in several areas of governance, assisting in reconstruction and building Iraqi government capacity. They are acting on behalf of the Coalition Provisional Authority. They remain answerable to HMG for what they do. HMG pays their salaries, travel costs and other incidental expenses. The US government funds the provision of food and other basic services to all Coalition Provisional Authority staff.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many technically trained Arabic speakers are members of the Iraq Survey Group; how many of the Arabic speakers are from the United Kingdom; and what estimate he has made of how long it will take to translate each of the documents obtained by the ISG on Iraq's military programmes that are deemed relevant to weapons of mass destruction. [153058]

Mr. MacShane: There are currently 320 technically-trained Arabic speakers with the Iraq Survey Group, of whom three are from the United Kingdom.

The Iraq Survey Group is still collecting documents. The time that it will take to translate such documents will vary according to the condition of any such documents and whether they are hand-written or typed. The best estimate available is that translation will take

on average one hour per page of text. It is not possible, however, to give any firm indication of how long any translation work might take or of what the eventual total volume of documents requiring translation might be.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are in place to ensure that women will be fairly represented in the first Iraqi parliament. [153255]

Mr. Rammell: The Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) is overseeing the drafting of a Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) to be completed by the end of February 2004. We are encouraging the IGC to ensure that the TAL includes provisions for the fair representation of women in the Transitional National Assembly.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether gender criteria will be applied to the selection of candidates for the forthcoming Iraqi parliament. [153256]

Mr. Rammell: This is a matter for the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), which is overseeing the drafting of a Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) to include criteria for the selection of candidates to the Transitional National Assembly (TNA). We are encouraging the IGC to use the TAL to promote the fair representation of women in the TNA.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date he first became aware to which Iraqi weapons the 45-minutes claim in the Iraq weapons of mass destruction dossier applied. [154182]

Mr. Straw: I first became aware of 'the 45-minute claim' when I read early drafts of the Government's dossier and the Joint Intelligence Committee's assessment dated 9 September 2002. The Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) in their report of 9 September 2003 (CM 5972) published, at paragraph 50, the relevant passage from the assessment. This stated: "Intelligence also indicates that chemical and biological munitions could be with military units and ready for firing within 20–45 minutes." The ISC also commented (para 57): "The JIC did not know precisely which munitions could be deployed from where to where and the context of the intelligence was not included in the JIC Assessment". I became aware that the intelligence behind this assessment referred to battlefield weapons in June 2003.

Nigeria

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Nigeria's development of nuclear ballistic missiles. [152852]

Mr. MacShane: The Government is concerned at reports of Nigerian interest in procuring ballistic missiles and associated technology. We have made our concerns known to the Nigerian Government. With our partners, we continue to work towards halting the proliferation of such weapons and programmes.

North Korea

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to North Korea about human rights. [153071]

Mr. Rammell: We are very concerned about reports of serious human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and raise the issue regularly with the DPRK authorities. We encourage DPRK to comply with the recommendations set out in the Resolution adopted at last year's UN Commission on Human Rights. Most recently, Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials raised human rights with DPRK diplomats on 2 February.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit North Korea. [153072]

Mr. Rammell: Foreign engagements for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel and occasionally not until they are under way.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of North Korea about their *(a)* ownership and *(b)* testing of (i) chemical and (ii) biological weapons. [153994]

Mr. Rammell: As a State Party to the Biological Weapons Convention, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is obliged to comply with the ban on developing, testing and stockpiling biological and toxin weapons. DPRK is not a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, but the EU has recently urged all non-signatories, including DPRK, to accede immediately. We have also recently raised reports of chemical testing on DPRK prisoners with DPRK Embassy officials. We are committed to combating the proliferation of WMD wherever it may occur, and will continue to urge the DPRK to comply with its international obligations.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Pakistan about the recent revelations by Abdul Qadeer Khan on his disclosure of nuclear weapons secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea. [154375]

Mr. Rammell: There has, so far, not been any appropriate opportunity for any detailed discussion of this issue with the Government of Pakistan.

We welcome assurances given by the President and the Government of Pakistan that Pakistan will not be involved in any proliferation of nuclear weapons technology.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the announcement by Abdul Qadeer Khan that he has passed on nuclear weapons technology. [154376]

Mr. Rammell: The Government condemns the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology from any source.

We welcome the fact that this route for the proliferation of nuclear technology suitable for the production of fissile material has been closed off. Government counter-proliferation experts continue to assess the impact of Dr. Khan's announcement.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make an assessment of the human rights situation in the Sudan. [153993]

Mr. Mullin: We monitor closely the human rights situation in Sudan. The application of "Hudud" (amputation) punishments and suppression of freedom of the press are issues that we raise regularly with the government. But we are also particularly concerned by reports of human rights abuses in Darfur, western Sudan, where fighting continues.

The promotion of human rights through advocacy with the government and support for Non Governmental Organisations remains one of our priorities. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development discussed the human rights situation with the President of Sudan and others during his visit to Khartoum on 10 December 2003.

Uganda

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the situation in Uganda; what recent representations he has made with regard to *(a)* the pace of democratisation and the introduction of multi party democracy, *(b)* the need for a political solution to the war against the Lord's Resistance Army, *(c)* ending the use of child soldiers, *(d)* ending the use of illegal detention centres, *(e)* ending the use of special military tribunals to try civilian opponents of the Government, *(f)* ending Uganda's role in training and arming militia armies in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the internal tribal militias and *(g)* bringing State security organisations under parliamentary supervision; and if he will make a statement. [153523]

Mr. Mullin: We are encouraging the Government of Uganda to open up political space and look forward to publication of the Constitutional Review Commission's recommendations for political change.

We regularly urge President Museveni to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We deeply deplore the use of child soldiers by the LRA. We are also concerned at UN reports that the Ugandan army has been recruiting underage soldiers. We have recently raised this issue with senior army commanders.

We are aware of reports of incidences of arbitrary arrest and the lack of due legal process, especially in northern Uganda. We take seriously reports of human rights abuses, including harassment of the opposition and raise our concerns with the Ugandan authorities. The EU regularly raises alleged Government use of detention centres.

We welcomed Ugandan withdrawal of its remaining troops from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on 2 June, in compliance with UNSCR 1468 (2003). The UK urges all neighbouring states to support the Transitional National Government and not to interfere in the DRC peace process.

We and EU partners regularly press the Ugandan Government to ensure due process of law and that state security agencies are subject to the proper scrutiny.

Ukraine

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit Ukraine. [153780]

Mr. MacShane: The Ukrainian Foreign Minister called on my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 12 January. During their talks, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister extended an invitation to the Foreign Secretary to visit Ukraine. Foreign engagements for the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel and occasionally not until they are under way.

I had a useful and productive visit to Ukraine last September, details of which were carried on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website (www.fco.gov.uk).

TRANSPORT

Anti-terrorist Measures

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures are being taken to improve the screening of freight containers for terrorist material. [152372]

Mr. Jamieson: The United Kingdom has a comprehensive security regime in place that it designed to protect the public while minimising the effect on trade and freedom of movement.

My Department works closely with HM Customs and Excise and others to enhance the existing security provisions relating to freight containers. For obvious reasons, it is not our practice to provide details of these measures. As part of this process the UK has signed up the US Container Security Initiative, whereby intelligence is shared between US and host nation Customs' officials. This operation is running in 19 countries and is proving very effective.

Our existing national regime will be augmented later this year with the implementation of the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) global maritime security regime, and within this the UK has identified containerised freight as being an area of specific interest.

BAe 146 Aircraft

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1010W, on BAe 146 aircraft, whether he expects the Air Accident Investigation Branch to publish in February its report of the investigation of a series of cabin air quality incidents involving BAe 146 aircraft and other similar incidents. [153908]

Mr. McNulty: The Air Accident Investigation Branch intends to publish its report shortly.

Central Railway

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a further statement on *(a)* the Government's policy on the Central Railway project and *(b)* the timescale for Ministers to consider and decide upon the request by Central Railway plc for the Government to support a hybrid bill. [153144]

Mr. McNulty: No timetable has been set. We are considering Central Railway's proposals carefully and will respond in due course.

M20

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Highways Agency last assessed the skid resistance of the M20 from junctions 3 to 5; and whether the results determined when future resurfacing would take place. [152511]

Mr. Jamieson: The skid resistance of the M20 from junctions 3 to 5 was reassessed in 2003 and results indicated that the surfacing meets the skidding resistance standard. This section of the M20 was resurfaced in 1999 with a new thin surface, as part of the Highways Agency's quieter surfacing programme on concrete carriageways. The Highways Agency would expect the surface to have a life in excess of eight years.

Ministerial Meetings

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what dates Ministers in his Department have held meetings with members and officials of the United States Administration since 1 January 2003; where each meeting was held; which Ministers were involved in each meeting; which United States Administration department attended each meeting; and which members and officials from the United States Administration attended each of these meetings. [152961]

Mr. McNulty: Ministers in the Department for Transport have not had any meetings with members and officials of the United States Administration since 1 January 2003.

Railways

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of train rolling stock leasing expenditure goes to profit. [153114]

Mr. McNulty: The contractual terms agreed between the rolling stock leasing companies (ROSCOs) and the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) do not cover profit levels. The reporting of profits is a matter for the ROSCOs themselves.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what representations he has received on *(a)* financing methods for and *(b)* the cost of new train rolling stock; [153120]

(2) what changes he plans to the supervision of the train rolling stock leasing market. [153121]

Mr. McNulty: The review of the railway industry announced by the Secretary of State on 19 January is directed specifically at the control of costs and the possibility of structural change. Rolling stock leasing arrangements will be among the issues to be considered as part of the review.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

British Federation of Film Societies

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what funding was received by the British Federation of Film Societies from the UK Film Council in each year from 1997; [152774]

(2) what the planned funding to the British Federation of Film Societies from the UK Film Council is for each year until 2006; and if she will make a statement. [152775]

Estelle Morris: The UK Film Council has awarded the British Federation of Film Societies (BFFS) £100,000 for each of the years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04. Prior to this, the BFFS received funding from the British Film Institute.

The UK Film Council has recently completed an extensive consultation on its funding and policy priorities for April 2004 to March 2007. The consultation document, "Three Years On", proposes that the UK Film Council continues to fund the BFFS at £100,000 per annum until 2006–07. The continuation of this funding would be dependent on a year-by-year assessment of the BFFS' performance against agreed performance targets relating to diversity and inclusion.

Golden Jubilee

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public money was spent on the Golden Jubilee celebrations. [150389]

Mr. Caborn: The provisional figure for the amount of public money spent on the Golden Jubilee celebrations is £14.9 million.

Licensing Act

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when her Department will issue working guidelines on the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. [153453]

Mr. Caborn: Statutory Guidance is to be issued to licensing authorities under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. This section requires that a draft of the Guidance must be laid before, and approved by resolution of, each House of Parliament before it is issued. The statutory Guidance will be laid before Parliament shortly for its approval.

Lotteries

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the rationale was for the decision not to abolish the maximum stake for lotteries. [153018]

Estelle Morris: The draft Gambling Bill removes restrictions on the size of stake in society lotteries, subject to the overriding principle that every ticket in the same lottery should cost the same, as recommended by the Gambling Review Body. In 2002 we doubled the legal limits on the size of prizes and on the maximum proceeds in society lotteries. But the draft Bill provides for such limits to remain, since removing them altogether would allow society lotteries to compete head-to-head with the National Lottery, which would potentially reduce both the overall size of prize pools and amounts raised for good causes.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to bring the regulation of prize competitions into line with that of society lotteries. [153019]

Estelle Morris: We announced the outcome of our consultation about the law on prize competitions and lotteries on 5 June 2003. We do not intend that prize competitions should be regulated in the same way as society lotteries. The law must however provide for a clear and enforceable distinction between the two and the draft Gambling Bill that we published in November contains legal tests that should enable this distinction to be made.

Copies of our statement, of the draft Bill and its accompanying documents are in the Libraries of both Houses.

Olympic Games Bid

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will discuss with Sport England the use of Rivington in the Chorley constituency for *(a)* cycling, *(b)* road racing, *(c)* mountain biking and *(d)* individual time trials as part of the 2012 Olympic Games bid. [153854]

Tessa Jowell: The bidding company, London 2012, is responsible for selecting the venues for the bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games and these were announced on 16 January. They were chosen to best fit the needs of the athletes, the Olympic Sports Federations and the requirements of the International Olympic Committee. Should the bid succeed, sporting facilities across the UK will have the opportunity to be used by national teams for training camps.

Public Service Broadcasting

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what plans she has to hold meetings with broadcasters to encourage them to provide viewing cards for digital access to public service broadcasting channels; and if she will make a statement; [153322]

(2) what plans her Department has to monitor the availability of free-to-view channels to satellite customers who do not subscribe to pay-to-view services; and if she will make a statement. [153323]

Estelle Morris: This is primarily a matter for the broadcasters. Until May last year, the BBC paid for 'solus' viewing cards enabling customers who did not wish to pay a subscription to receive the public service broadcasting channels by satellite. However, following the move of its broadcast services to a new satellite, all of the BBC's digital channels are now available via satellite without the need for a viewing card. It has therefore stopped paying for the provision of solus cards.

Following representations from the Government, an agreement was reached between the other main broadcasters and BSkyB to ensure that existing solus card viewers could continue receiving the other public service channels after their current cards expired in 2003. Viewers were able to purchase a new card, valid until at least 31 December 2005, for a one-off fee of £20 + VAT. This offer was extended until 31 January 2004.

We understand that the broadcasters have no current plans to provide solus cards to new satellite customers. However, the Government remain committed to ensuring that analogue terrestrial broadcasting signals are maintained until everyone who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels (BBC1 and 2, ITV1, Channel 4/S4C and Five) can receive them free-to-view via at least one of the digital platforms.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Select Committees

Jon Trickett: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what his estimate is of the total amount of staff hours spent in 2003–04 in support of *(a)* select committees of the House other than the Committee of Public Accounts and *(b)* the Committee of Public Accounts; what the budget allocated to each is in 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [153383]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: I refer the hon. Member to Part 10 of the Sessional Return for 2002–03, which was published yesterday as House of Commons Paper 1 of this Session. This gives details of the staff who serve each committee. In addition, the Committee of Public Accounts is supported by the National Audit Office which has a staff of 811 in total. There is no budgetary allocation to individual committees; however, expenditure attributable to each committee appears in the Sessional Return.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Action for Southern Africa

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the decision to reject the funding application from Action for Southern Africa. [153769]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) was unsuccessful in securing a grant from the Development Awareness Fund last year for the following reasons.

There was no real evidence that there was a demand for the project from the intended beneficiaries.

The project relied too heavily on DFID funding (80 per cent.) and, at the time, of applying, the remaining 20 per cent. had not been secured from other donors.

There were concerns that the target audiences were spread too widely and as a consequence, the messages conveyed would lack focus.

Feedback covering these concerns was given to ACTSA in May 2003 with an invitation to contact the Department with a view to working with them in the future.

Adam Smith Institute

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the purposes were of each of the contracts awarded by his Department to the Adam Smith Institute in each of the last four years. [153277]

Hilary Benn: The following table sets out the purpose of our contracts with Adam Smith International Ltd. in each of the last four years. All contracts with Adam Smith International Ltd. have been awarded and managed in line with DFID's standard procurement procedures.

	Project title (Contract purpose)	*Country*	*Current value[1] (£)*
1999	PR Unit Support For Parastatal Sector Reform Commission (PSRC) (Public Relations Unit)	Tanzania	430,625
1999	Privatisation Project Phase 3 and 4 Managing Consultant	Guyana	1,718,736
1999	Privatisation Agency Support Project Consultancy	Zimbabwe	560,752
1999	Technical Assistance for Public Enterprise Reform in Orissa	India	3,667,571
1999	Assistance to the Palestinian Negotiations Affairs Department	West Bank and Gaza	9,131,555
1999	Additional Support to the Privatisation Board	Bangladesh	106,241
1999	UK-Ireland Privatisation and Regulation Study Tour	Tanzania	11,145
1999	Medium Term Programme of Capacity Building for PURC (Public Utilities Regulatory Commission)	Ghana	1,559,960
1999	Initial Support to the Budgetary Processes of the Government of Macedonia	Macedonia	44,315
2000	Rehabilitation of Cyclone Damaged Lift Irrigation Points in Orissa	India	1,296,327
2000	Seminar on Export Credits and Developing Countries	United Kingdom	102,594
2000	Lead Adviser to Parastatal Sector Reform Commission (PSRC)	Tanzania	229,966
2000	Russia Trade Policy Project (Technical Support)	Russia	1,199,986
2001	Conference on Disinvestment (Organisation of Conference)	India	70,000
2001	Support for Public Sector Undertaking Reforms and Social Safety Net in Madhya Pradesh	India	80,000
2001	PSRC: Water Privatisation and Regulation Study Tour (Parastatal Sector Reform Commission)	Tanzania	54,924
2001	Communications Film for Department of Disinvestment	India	89,500
2001	Consultants for Standards, Technical Regulatory Barriers Programme (Problems of access to EU market experienced by developing countries)	Global (Non Project Specific)	92,870
2002	Trade Training for DFID Staff	United Kingdom	20,075
2002	Pilot Training and Capacity Building in International Watercourse Law	Kyrgyz Republic	151,008
2002	Trade Training for DFID Staff—Bangkok	United Kingdom	32,328
2002	Support for Capacity-Building in the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank	Afghanistan	3,277,815
2003	Support Services for Public Enterprise Restructuring in South Africa	South Africa, Republic of	6,363,435
2003	Support to Water Sector Regulation by PURC-Ghana (Public Utilities Regulatory Commission)	Ghana	1,079,100
2003	Andhra Pradesh Economic Restructuring Programme-Public Enterprise Reforms, Phase II	India	416,435
2003	Economic Support within 1st Military Division Hq Basra	Iraq	55,510
2003	Economic Development within 1st Military Division Hq Basra	Iraq	119,848
2003	Support to the Office of the Prime Minister and to the Cabinet Office, (capacity building support to the Palestinian National Authority)	West Bank and Gaza	100,400
2003	ITD-DFID Staff Training (International Trade Department)	Global (Non Project Specific)	288,685
2003	Asia Trade Consultancy (A paper for DFID on the regional trade issues in Asia)	United Kingdom	44,200
2003	International Lawyer within 1st Military Division Hq Basra	Iraq	131,868
2003	Economic Support to Coalition Provisional Authority South (CPAS)	Iraq	111,255
2003	Secondment of Negotiations Support Staff to the Office of Prime Minister	West Bank and Gaza	75,800
2003	Legal Adviser within Coalition Provisional Authority South (CPAS)	Iraq	72,925

[1] Original contract value plus cost of any increases or extensions.

Burundi

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in the Kirundo region of Burundi. [153348]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Months of drought throughout 2003 have affected the 2004 agricultural season especially in the Bugabira and Ntega districts. 29,000 households in Bugabira district and 18,900 households in Ntega district and neighbouring zones of Kirundo are facing this problem. The Food and Agricultural Organisation field crops evaluation report informs us that beans, potatoes and maize have been strongly affected by the prolonged lack of rain. Cassava mosaic disease has affected the cultivation of cassava, one of the main foodstuffs.

Humanitarian international NGOs and agencies working in the food security sector are looking at the situation. The World Food Programme is organising food distribution in Kirundo from 16 February. The Food and Agricultural Organisation has increased the number of Seeds Protection Rations beneficiaries from 15,000 to 24,000 households, set up the distribution of

potato cuttings and is providing additional support to provincial committees working on local solutions to the cassava mosaic disease.

Liberia

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress is being made on the demobilisation of child soldiers in Liberia; and if he will make a statement. [153345]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The United Nations estimates that there are approximately 15,000 Children Associated with Fighting Forces (CAFF) to be demobilised in Liberia. Currently, about 190 children have been demobilised and are held in four Interim Care Centres (ICCs), which will allow them to be separated from adult fighters, and where they will receive specialised care and assistance. The ICCs are positioned in Monrovia, Buchanan and Tubmanburg, and are run by Save the Children UK, Don Bosco Homes and Samaritan's Purse International Relief. UNICEF have recently arranged, with UNDP and UNMIL, for children at the ICCs to be formally demobilised and to be registered and issued with their Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) numbers. We understand that this exercise will start during the week of 9 February. We have provided £300,000 to UNICEF to establish five Interim Care Centres.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to ensure long-term *(a)* economic stability *(b)* investment and *(c)* economic growth in Liberia. [153347]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The conditions for the establishment of long-term economic stability, investment and growth will depend on peace and security, and a successful programme, by the National Transition Government of Liberia (NTGL), of reconstruction. The recent, successful, Liberia Reconstruction Conference showed strong support from the international community for the Results Focussed Transition Framework, agreed by the NTGL and the international community as the basis for an extensive reconstruction programme.

We have committed £6 million for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR); our share of EU programmes in 2003 and 2004 is about £13 million. These amounts are in addition to our contribution to humanitarian programmes of £10.6 million to date.

Palestinian Christians

Ann Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what humanitarian efforts are being made to ensure that non-governmental organisations are able to support small Palestinian Christian communities in gaining access to food, water and medical treatment. [153308]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID, and the wider international community, have supported a wide range of initiatives to help meet the urgent needs of Palestinians, as economic and social conditions have seriously deteriorated. Helping maintain access to water, health, and relief services is a vital aspect of this. We and our partners target our support to Palestinians most in need, rather than specific communities. We work closely with a number of partners including the Palestinian Authority and local and international NGOs. Our support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency also plays a significant role in delivering basic services to refugees in many of the most disadvantaged communities.

Swaziland

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will break down by aid project the sum which his Department spent bilaterally in Swaziland in 2002–03. [153134]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is currently supporting two projects in Swaziland through its bilateral programme—a rural water supply programme (on which DFID spent £119,000 in 2002–03) and a programme of assistance to the Coalition of Non-Government Organisations (on which DFID spent £101,000 in 2002–03). During 2002–03 DFID also made payments totalling £222,000 on nine other bilateral projects which closed during that year.

In addition to these payments, the published statistics for DFID support to Swaziland include other items such as payments made to non-government organisations through the Small Grants Scheme and Joint Funding Scheme, and contributions to the Commonwealth Scholarship scheme in respect of Swaziland.

DFID is also supporting Swaziland through a number of regional initiatives. In particular, we are supporting work on HIV/AIDS, through the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa, and through the Southern African Development Community. Since this support is routed through regional organisations, it does not appear in the statistics for bilateral support to Swaziland.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what plans he has to ensure the continuation of funding for treatment of tuberculosis in all high burden countries under the World Health Organisation DOTS treatment scheme; [151624]

(2) what plans he has to increase access to the World Health Organisation DOTS scheme; and if he will make a statement; [151625]

(3) what action he is taking to improve the rates of successful treatment of tuberculosis in high burden countries. [151626]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Tuberculosis (TB) is a preventable tragedy, yet it kills approximately two million people each year and continues to threaten health, prosperity and social stability. 92 per cent. of cases and deaths occur in low income and lower middle income countries. The World Health Organisation has set TB-control goals for 2005: to detect 70 per cent. of all new infectious TB cases worldwide and to successfully treat 85 per cent. of all cases detected. However, without a dramatic increase in the response, the international community will at best only achieve this target in 2013. Effective control will require concerted action at

inter ional and country levels to increase access to the WF recommended DOTS treatment strategy, which co ines five elements: political commitment, microscopy services, drug supplies, surveillance and monitoring systems and use of highly efficacious regimes with direct observation of treatment. We work through the World Health Assembly and other channels to ensure that WHO appropriately prioritises the goal of increasing access to medicines for the poorest in line with the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals.

DFID is committed to expanding the accessibility of diagnostic and treatment services for TB, particularly to poor communities and to women. The UK is a member of the co-ordinating Board of the global Stop TB partnership, and in 2002–03, we provided £0.99 million to the partnership, which included a contribution to the cost of the important evaluation of the Global TB Drug Facility (GDF).

We also support the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria as a new mechanism to complement existing initiatives for these diseases, and have pledged US$280 million through to 2008 to the Fund. The Global Fund has already approved grants totalling US$2.1 billion, which will be used to provide direct support to programmes in developing countries, including the treatment of TB in over 40 countries. Additionally, we fund TB Knowledge and Research Programmes at £1.3 million per year.

To achieve the 2005 targets for DOTS implementation, the international community must address the broader health sector, including human resources for health, primary health care provision, private sector and corporate sector contributions, and working within poverty alleviation strategies. DFID has committed over £1.5 billion since 1997 to support the strengthening of health systems in developing countries.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support the Government gives India to combat tuberculosis. [152973]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Tuberculosis is a major health issue in India. Around 500,000 people die from TB each year, which disproportionately affects the poor. The Government are supporting the Government of India's programme to improve the provision of tuberculosis treatment services in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

DFID is providing £20.5 million over five years, to bring about a sustainable improvement in the quality and effectiveness of TB services, ensuring that they are accessible to everyone, especially poor people. DFID funds are used to purchase drugs and microscopes, to train staff, to fund the World Health Organisation in providing technical support, and to improve management systems. The work in Andhra Pradesh, as well as that supported by other donors across India, is contributing to the development of a national policy framework for TB care.

In addition, at international level the UK has pledged US$280 million through to 2008 to the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. These funds will be used to provide direct support to programmes in developing countries, including the treatment of TB. The Global Fund Board has approved proposals for TB programmes in India totalling $38 million.

The UK is also an active member of the global Stop TB partnership which helps to raise the commitment and resources needed to expand, adapt and improve efforts to control and eliminate TB. In 2002–03 DFID provided £0.75 million to the partnership.

Zambia

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on cholera levels in Zambia. [153349]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There have been 3,965 reported cases of cholera, and 196 recorded deaths from cholera in Zambia in 2003–04 so far.

The Government have responded by establishing treatment centres in affected areas and mobilising drugs and personnel. Cholera awareness campaigns and contact tracing have been initiated and infection control measures stepped up. Other Government ministries have been mobilised. The Zambian armed forces will soon begin deliveries of safe water. Wells are being disinfected and free distribution of chlorine to disinfect water at the household level is planned.

In 2003, DFID contributed to district health recurrent costs to the sum of £7.5 million, including the funding of epidemic preparedness plans. DFID is currently arranging for the purchase of needed chlorine. Other agencies supporting the response are WHO, UNICEF, Red Cross and MSF.

SCOTLAND

Scottish Economy

6. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the prospects for the Scottish economy. [152892]

Mr. Darling: The prospects for the Scottish economy are good. There is a growing consensus among business surveys pointing towards a continued strengthening of business activity in Scotland in both services and manufacturing. Furthermore, independent forecasters predict that the Scottish economy will experience above-trend growth in 2004 and 2005.

Cannabis

7. **Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he had with *(a)* the Scottish Executive and *(b)* the Home Office regarding assessment of cannabis street prices in Scotland. [152893]

Mrs. McGuire: Scottish Executive ministers keep in regular contact with their UK counterparts to ensure a co-ordinated approach to drugs related issues. Scottish police forces monitor the street prices of drugs across Scotland, which are subject to local variations and fluctuations, as in other parts of the UK.

10. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Scottish Executive about the reclassification of cannabis. [152896]

Mrs. McGuire: The legislation governing the classification of drugs is reserved to the UK Government and is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. The Home Office is working closely with the Scottish Executive to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the reclassification of cannabis, which took effect on 29 January.

Rail Services

8. **Mr. Savidge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what issues relating to Scotland will be considered during the Rail Review. [152894]

Mr. Darling: Scotland will benefit from the Review looking at all aspects of improving the structure and organisation for Britain's railways. The Review should also look at how we can devolve more decisions on rail to Scotland.

9. **Mr. Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with Scottish Ministers regarding rail services in the Edinburgh area. [152895]

Mr. Darling: I have regular discussions with Scottish Executive Ministers on transport and my other responsibilities.

Higher Education

11. **Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received from the First Minister on higher education. [152897]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has frequent exchanges with the First Minister on a range of issues, including higher education.

Electoral System

12. **John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the voting system used in elections for the Scottish Parliament. [152898]

Mr. Darling: I refer my hon. Friend to the announcement I made yesterday (9 February) during Second Reading of the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Bill on my proposal to establish a commission to review electoral arrangements in Scotland, including whether changes might be required regarding the method of voting in Scottish Parliament elections.

Population

13. **Mr. Weir:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received on the projected decline of Scotland's population. [152899]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has received no representations on this issue. Matters related to population projections for Scotland are for the Scottish Executive.

Population projections for Scotland are made by the General Register Office for Scotland, an associated department of the Scottish Executive. 2002-based population projections for Scottish areas are available on its website at www.gro-scotland.gov.uk

Barnett Formula

14. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the future of the Barnett Formula. [152900]

Mr. Darling: No such discussions have taken place. The Government have no plans to replace or to review the Barnett formula. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, confirmed this in reply to an oral question on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 401–02.

Postal Services/Post Offices

15. **Mr. Alan Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has held with ministerial colleagues regarding the future of postal services and post offices in Scotland. [152901]

Mrs. McGuire: I have regular discussions with ministerial colleagues on a wide range of issues, including postal services in Scotland.

DEFENCE

Apache Helicopters

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much it costs to train a pilot to fly Apache helicopters; and how long the training takes. [153977]

Mr. Ingram: The basic Conversion to Type course for qualified Army pilots on the Apache helicopter at the School of Army Aviation, Middle Wallop, is 26 weeks. A current estimate of cost for this course for one pilot (the course has yet to complete) is £600,000. Once qualified, pilots then progress to a Conversion to Role course which will take place at Dishforth and Wattisham, and is run by the Air Manoeuvre Training Advisory Team (AMTAT). This course is of 26 weeks duration and an estimate of cost is £550,000.

Army Leavers

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many commanding officers have been instructed to offer soldiers due to leave in September the opportunity to leave the Army up to nine months early. [153070]

Mr. Caplin: Approximately 270 Commanding Officers have been told that individuals who have already given notice to terminate their engagement before 30 September 2004 may be given the option to leave sooner if this is acceptable both to the individual and their unit. There will be no compulsion on any individual.

Aviation Noise

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to publish the study into helicopter noise at RAF Shawbury which began in summer 2002, carried out by the Centre of Aviation Medicine. [153954]

Mr. Ingram: The study has just been completed and is due to be released on Friday 13 February 2004. I have asked for a copy to be sent to the hon. Member.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to publish the report on military aviation noise conducted by the Directorate of Safety Environment and Fire Policy. [153967]

Mr. Caplin: It is planned to publish the report at Easter time.

Communications

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the reliability of secure satellite communications links available to the UK commanders during Operation Telic; what commercial facilities were utilised; and at what cost. [147275]

Mr. Ingram: Secure satellite communications links provided to UK commanders during Operation Telic included both military links through the SKYNET system, and commercial links supporting the Operational Strategic CIS Architecture (OSCA). The overall reliability of secure satellite communications links was high. Some difficulties in maintaining strategic communications links did occur but these did not significantly affect the operational outcome.

£1.5 million was spent on acquiring the commercial satellite communications hardware for OSCA. A further £9.8 million has been incurred on communications services provided by Cable & Wireless and INMARSAT up to December 2003. The costs attributable to OSCA are included in the overall procurement and running costs for the system totalling £33 million up to December 2003.

Deaths in Service

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many service personnel who lost their lives accidentally in non-combat situations outside the UK in each year since 1990, are recorded as *(a)* deaths from road traffic accidents and *(b)* deaths from other accidents; [149660]

(2) how many service personnel who lost their lives in combat situations outside the UK in each year since 1990 are recorded as *(a)* killed in combat, *(b)* killed in friendly fire or other accidents, *(c)* self-inflicted deaths and *(d)* deaths from other causes; [149658]

(3) how many service personnel who lost their lives in non-combat situations outside the UK in each year since 1990, are recorded as *(a)* self-inflicted deaths, *(b)* accidental deaths and *(c)* deaths from other causes; [149659]

(4) how many service personnel have lost their lives outside the UK in each year since 1990; and how many of these are recorded as deaths in *(a)* combat situations and *(b)* non-combat situations. [149657]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Defence 2004

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the budgeted cost was of the Defence 2004 display scheduled to be held at RAF Fairfield; how many troops were to have been involved; and if he will make a statement on its cancellation. [153013]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* The planned expenditure for Defence 2004, which was to have taken place during the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) at RAF Fairford (not Fairfield) in July, was £1.85 million. It would have required approximately 3,300 military personnel for up to a week.

As I said in my written statement on 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 22WS, the decision to cancel Defence 2004 was taken because of the continued high level of operational commitments and the associated demands upon Service personnel and their families. The Services will, however, continue to fully support RIAT and we will be working closely with the RAF Benevolent Fund Enterprises who organise the event, to help ensure that RIAT continues its tradition of great success.

Defence Equipment

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Challenger 2 Main Battle Tanks, *(b)* Warrior Armoured Personnel Carriers, *(c)* AS-90s and *(d)* Multiple Launch Rocket Systems are based in Germany. [153519]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently 172 Challenger II Main Battle Tanks, 361 Warrior Vehicles (all variants) and 50 AS90 based in Germany. There are no Multiple Launch Rocket Systems based in Germany at this time.

Defence Finance

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the planned funding in cash terms is for each of his Department's management groups for financial years 2003–04 to 2006–07; [153024]

(2) what the planned funding is in cash terms for his Department's executive agencies for financial years 2003–04 to 2006–07. [153022]

Mr. Ingram: Since the introduction of Resource Accounting and Budgeting, the Department has required its Management Groupings (including on-vote agencies) to construct their plans on a resource basis, rather than in cash terms. Spending Review 2002 set out the Departmental Expenditure Limit in resource terms for the years 2002–03 to 2005–06. Figures for 2006–7 will be agreed during Spending Review 2005.

Cash requirements are planned and accounted for at Departmental rather than Management Grouping level and details of the Net Cash Requirement for FY2003/4 can be found in the Central Government Supply Estimates 2003–04 (HC648 Main Supply Estimates and HC15 Winter Supplementary Estimate).

Departmental Reports and Accounts

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the dates of publication of *(a)* the annual report and accounts and *(b)* the corporate plan for his Department's executive agencies were in each year since financial year 1997–98. [153028]

Mr. Caplin: All Defence Agencies are required to lay their Annual Reports and Accounts before Parliament. The table as follows gives the publication dates for all Defence Agencies for financial year 2002–03. Since 1997–98 a number of Defence Agencies have changed or merged. Detailed publication dates for these previous years are not held centrally in the precise format required and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Further information on all parliamentary business is however published in the House of Commons Votes and Proceedings, available on the United Kingdom Parliament Website at http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/cmvote/cmvp0307.htm.

All Defence Agencies are required to produce key targets annually. These are published in Parliament and then incorporated by agencies into their plans, which are published in a variety of formats and are usually available on agency websites or through the agencies themselves. Dates of publication for individual agency plans in the precise format requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Dates of key targets published for financial year 2003–04 are given as follows.

	Date laid before Parliament	
Agency	*(a) Accounts FY 2002–03*	*(b) Key Targets FY 2003–04*
ABRO	15 July 2003	8 July 2003
Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency	15 July 2003	9 April 2003
Army Personnel Centre	10 July 2003	17 July 2003
Army Training and Recruiting Agency	16 December 2003	17 July 2003
British Forces Post Office	11 December 2003	12 June 2003
Defence Aviation Repair Agency	17 November 2003	8 July 2003
Defence Analytical Services Agency	16 July 2003	4 April 2003
Defence Bills Agency	11 July 2003	29 April 2003
Defence Communications Services Agency	29 January 2004	7 November 2003
Defence Dental Agency	15 July 2003	31 March 2003
Defence Estates	16 July 2003	2 July 2003
Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency	16 December 2003	6 November 2003
Defence Housing Executive	16 July 2003	2 July 2003
Defence Intelligence and Security Centre	31 October 2003	6 November 2003
Defence Medical Training Organisation[1]	15 July 2003	[2] 31 March 2003
Defence Procurement Agency	4 December 2003	9 July 2003
Defence Science and Technology Laboratory	14 July 2003	16 October 2003
Defence Secondary Care Agency	15 July 2003	n/a
Defence Storage and Distribution Agency	15 July 2003	12 June 2003
Defence Transport and Movements Agency	16 July 2003	12 June 2003
Defence Vetting Agency	16 July 2003	28 April 2003
Disposal Services Agency	16 July 2003	3 July 2003
Duke of York's Royal Military School	29 October 2003	16 July 2003
Medical Supplies Agency	16 July 2003	19 November 2003
Met Office	23 June 2003	11 June 2003
Ministry of Defence Police	16 July 2003	26 June 2003
Naval Manning Agency	16 July 2003	22 May 2003
Naval Recruiting and Training Agency	16 July 2003	4 June 2003
Pay and Personnel Agency	16 July 2003	29 April 2003
Queen Victoria School	29 January 2004	16 July 2003
RAF Personnel Manning Agency	16 July 2003	9 July 2003
RAF Training Group Defence Agency	13 November 2003	17 July 2003
Service Children's Education	22 January 2004	17 July 2003
UK Hydrographic Office	10 July 2003	25 June 2003
Veterans Agency	16 July 2003	28 October 2003
Warship Support Agency	10 December 2003	15 October 2003

[1] The Defence Medical Training Organisation and the Defence Secondary Care Agency merged at 1 April 2003 and formed the Defence Medical Education and Training Agency.
[2] Refers to key targets for the newly formed Defence Medical Education and Training Agency.

Dr. David Kelly

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the occasions on which Dr. David Kelly spoke to the media *(a)* on an authorised basis and *(b)* on an unauthorised basis while employed by his Department. [152293]

Mr. Hoon: I refer my hon. Friend to the documents labelled MOD/5/0054 to MOD/5/0060, which are available on the Hutton Inquiry website and which list Dr. Kelly's contacts with journalists over the past two years. This was copied from information supplied by Dr. Kelly to MOD on 17 July 2003. The Ministry of Defence does not have access to any other records that might have provided further information.

Evidence relating to unauthorised disclosures to Andrew Gilligan, Susan Watts, Peter Beaumont, Julie Flint, and Gavin Hewitt was heard in the course of Lord Hutton's inquiry.

Engagements

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what dates since 1 January 2002 Sir Kevin Tebbit held meetings with Mr. Earl Anthony Wayne,

Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs of the United States State Department; and where each meeting took place. [152963]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 843W.

Iraq

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what provision has been made for personnel to send gifts back to the United Kingdom; what weight limits and costs are involved; and if he will make a statement. [144471]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 December 2003]:* British Armed Forces personnel deployed overseas, with the exception of those in the Gulf, may send parcels home up to a maximum weight of 30 kilograms at a concessionary rate equivalent to United Kingdom second class post. Personnel in the Gulf can currently send parcels of up to two kilograms per item to the UK also at concessionary rates.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy was in March 2003 on whether use by Iraq of battlefield chemical and biological weapons would generate the very serious consequences to which he referred in debate on 26 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 302. [154325]

Mr. Hoon: The Government's policy is to reserve the right to respond appropriately to any use of such weapons. This was also the policy in March 2003.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost has been to public funds of the British contingent in the Iraq Survey Group; what the projected future costs are; and if he will make a statement. [154282]

Mr. Hoon: The Ministry of Defence identifies the costs of Operations in terms of the net additional costs it has incurred. The costs that the Department would have incurred regardless of the operation taking place, such as wages and salaries, are not included. Savings on activities that have not occurred because of the operation—training exercises for example—are taken into account in arriving at the net figures.

The net additional costs incurred by United Kingdom personnel attached to the Iraq Survey Group cannot be differentiated from the total net additional cost of UK personnel deployed to the Gulf region. For example, stock accounting records will identify the recipient of stock as entitled UK military personnel, not whether they are engaged in peacekeeping work or in the search for WMD. Therefore, it is not possible to identify costs related solely to the UK's Iraq Survey Group personnel.

Military Equipment (Gulf)

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the performance of military equipment in the Gulf. [142976]

Mr. Hoon: The Ministry of Defence's report on Operation Telic, "Lessons for the Future", closely reflects the conclusions of the independent report by the National Audit Office that

> "the logistic effort for the Operation was huge and key to success"

and that

> "key equipments . . . performed well".

Both reports recognise that there are areas for improvement. This includes, in the logistic area, developing a more robust in-theatre asset-tracking system.

Missile Defence

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much the United Kingdom has spent on all aspects of ballistic missile defence in each year since 1997. [154103]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 920W, to the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Keetch).

Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Charles Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average number of days a year was in the last five years that the nuclear submarine berths *(a)* at Loch Ewe and *(b)* in Broadford Bay were occupied; what change in occupancy is projected; and if he will make a statement. [152753]

Mr. Ingram: The berths at Loch Ewe and Broadford Bay can be used by nuclear submarines and surface vessels. Occupancy of the berths by nuclear submarines is recorded in hours. The average number of hours per year over the last five years when the berths have been occupied by nuclear submarines is 13.2 hours for Loch Ewe and 2.4 hours for Broadford Bay. Surface ship occupancy is recorded in days. The average number of days per year over the last five years when the berths have been occupied by surface vessels is 48.6 days for Loch Ewe and nil for Broadford Bay. There are no plans to change the usage pattern.

Royal College of Defence Medicine

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans the Royal College of Defence Medicine has for the Selly Oak Hospital site in Birmingham. [153884]

Mr. Caplin: We are currently considering options for the future provision of accommodation for our medical personnel in Birmingham. Preliminary discussions have taken place with University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust (UHBT), but at present the MOD has no plans for the Selly Oak Site.

Security Passes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many security passes have been reported by staff in his Department as *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen in the last 12 months. [151520]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 371W, to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten).

Special Investigations Branch

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who is responsible for responding to reports of the Special Investigations Branch; and what options are available for further action to be taken. [147710]

Mr. Ingram: Upon completion of a Special Investigation Branch (SIB) investigation, a report is produced which is passed to the Commanding Officer of the unit involved. The Commanding Officer is then advised by the relevant service legal branch, as to the options available to him, such as whether the matter could be dealt with summarily by the Commanding Officer himself, or a more senior officer in the chain of command, or whether the case should be passed to the relevant service Prosecuting Authority. Service Prosecuting Authorities then decide whether to proceed to Court Martial based on their responsibilities under prosecuting guidelines issued by the Attorney-General.

In addition, the report produced by the Special Investigation Branch may be used to inform a Board of Inquiry.

Surplus Military Equipment

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will publish regulations governing the disposal of surplus military equipment; [153004]

(2) whether surplus military equipment with a security classification of restricted and above is disposed of by sale or auction; and what safeguards are applied; [153005]

(3) what safeguards there are on the end use of surplus military equipment disposed of by sale or auction. [153006]

Mr. Ingram: There are many regulations governing the disposal of surplus military equipments ranging from internal Ministry of Defence procedures focusing on the supply chain decision-making process to those national and international regulations such as the Basel Convention. Particular procedures would be dependent on the type of equipment involved and there are numerous disposal instructions in existence. This information is not held centrally and, without being more specific, could be provided only at disproportionate cost. National and international procedures are in the public domain.

The MOD ensures that most sensitive surplus military equipment is destroyed. However, certain classified material may be resold by the MOD's Disposal Services Agency (DSA) either directly on a Government-to-Government basis, to the original equipment manufacturer or via some of the DSA's marketing agreements with industry. Safeguards are in place to ensure that all exports (direct or subsequent via a marketing agreement) are covered by an appropriate export licence. The DSA's contractors that hold classified material (for sale) will have appropriate MOD security clearance and, additionally, the Official Secrets Act would apply. No such material would be sold at auction.

All surplus equipment sold directly by the DSA on a Government-to-Government basis contain conditions that require the end user Government to seek MOD approval prior to subsequent resale to a third party.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* ships, *(b)* aircraft and *(c)* military vehicles have been disposed of by (i) sale and (ii) auction in the past six years. [153007]

Mr. Ingram: The major former Royal Naval ships (named capital ships) sold by the Ministry of Defence's Disposal Services Agency (DSA) in the last six years are listed as follows. None was sold by auction.

Financial year 1998–99

HMS Soberton
HMS Egeria
HMY Britannia

Financial year 1999–2000

HMS Kellington

Financial year 2000–01

HMS Wilton
HMS Bicester
HMS Orkney
HMS Birmingham
HMS Beaver
RFA Olwen
RFA Olna

Financial year 2001–02

HMS Bulldog
HMS Berkeley
HMS Orwell
HMS Herald

Financial year 2002–03

HMS Beagle
HMS London
HMS Coventry
HMS Shetland
HMS Alderney
HMS Anglesey
HMS Lindisfarne
HMS Guernsey
HMS Sheffield

Financial year 2003–04

None

Surplus aircraft sold by the DSA in the past six calendar years are set out in the following table, broken down by sale and auction.

	1998	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Jet Provost	—	—	1	—	—	5
Sale	—	—	1	—	—	5
Auction	—	—	0	—	—	0
Jetstream	—	2	—	—	—	—
Sale	—	2	—	—	—	—
Auction	—	0	—	—	—	—
Meteor	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	0	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	1	—	—	—	—	—

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Schleicher						
Valiant Glider	—	—	4	—	—	—
Sale	—	—	0	—	—	—
Auction	—	—	4	—	—	—
Varsity	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	0	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	1	—	—	—	—	—
Victor	2	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	1	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	1	—	—	—	—	—
Andover	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	0	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	1	—	—	—	—	—
BAC 1–11	—	—	1	—	—	—
Sale	—	—	0	—	—	—
Auction	—	—	1	—	—	—
BAE 146	—	—	—	—	1	—
Sale	—	—	—	—	1	—
Auction	—	—	—	—	0	—
Buccaneer	1	—	3	1	—	—
Sale	1	—	1	1	—	—
Auction	0	—	2	0	—	—
Bulldog	—	6	28	73	—	—
Sale	—	0	17	39	—	—
Auction	—	6	11	34	—	—
Chipmunk	—	—	3	—	—	—
Sale	—	—	0	—	—	—
Auction	—	—	3	—	—	—
Canberra	1	—	—	—	3	2
Sale	0	—	—	—	3	2
Auction	1	—	—	—	0	0
Chieftan	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	0	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	1	—	—	—	—	—
Devon	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	0	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	1	—	—	—	—	—
Gnat	—	—	1	—	—	—
Sale	—	—	0	—	—	—
Auction	—	—	1	—	—	—
HS 125	2	—	—	—	—	1
Sale	2	—	—	—	—	1
Auction	0	—	—	—	—	0
Harrier	2	6	—	2	11	2
Sale	2	6	—	2	11	2
Auction	0	0	—	0	0	0
Hunter	2	2	7	—	1	—
Sale	1	2	1	—	1	—
Auction	1	0	6	—	0	—
Jaguar	4	—	—	3	2	—
Sale	3	—	—	3	2	—
Auction	1	—	—	0	0	—
Schempp-Hirth						
Janus-C	—	—	1	—	—	—
Sale	—	—	0	—	—	—
Auction	—	—	1	—	—	—
Javelin	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	0	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	1	—	—	—	—	—

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Gazelle	4	2	8	20	4	12
Sale	2	2	4	10	4	12
Auction	2	0	4	10	0	0
Lynx						
Helicopters	—	—	—	—	3	—
Sale	—	—	—	—	3	—
Auction	—	—	—	—	0	—
Sioux						
Helicopters	—	1	—	—	—	—
Sale	—	1	—	—	—	—
Auction	—	0	—	—	—	—
Wessex						
Helicopters	14	2	4	3	6	7
Sale	7	2	2	2	6	7
Auction	7	0	2	1	0	0
Whirlwind	1	1	2	—	—	2
Sale	1	1	2	—	—	2
Auction	0	0	0	—	—	0
VC10	—	—	1	—	—	1
Sale	—	—	1	—	—	1
Auction	—	—	0	—	—	0
Lightning	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	1	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	0	—	—	—	—	—
Shackleton	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	1	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	0	—	—	—	—	—
Tornado	—	1	2	7	15	4
Sale	—	1	2	7	15	4
Auction	—	0	0	0	0	0
Puma	—	—	—	—	—	1
Sale	—	—	—	—	—	1
Auction	—	—	—	—	—	0
Hercules	—	—	—	2	—	2
Sale	—	—	—	2	—	2
Auction	—	—	—	0	—	0
Sea King	—	—	—	—	1	—
Sale	—	—	—	—	1	—
Auction	—	—	—	—	0	—
Viking Glider	—	—	—	—	1	—
Sale	—	—	—	—	1	—
Auction	—	—	—	—	0	—
Phantom	4	—	6	10	—	—
Sale	4	—	6	10	—	—
Auction	0	—	0	0	—	—
Merlin	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sale	1	—	—	—	—	—
Auction	0	—	—	—	—	—

As there were approximately 23,000 surplus military vehicles sold in the last six years, itemised sales figures could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Trident

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the cost, in real terms, of the Trident submarine fleet, including missiles and warheads, for each year since its initial deployment; and what the overall cost was of acquiring *(a)* the submarines and *(b)* the missiles and warheads. [154106]

Mr. Hoon: The cost, in real terms, of the Trident submarine fleet, including missiles and warheads, for each year since its initial deployment has ranged between 2 per cent. and 4 per cent. of the annual defence budget.

The overall cost of acquiring *(a)* the submarines is £5.481 billion and *(b)* the missiles and warheads is £3.727 billion.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Pre-legislative Scrutiny

36. **Tony Wright:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will make an assessment of the effect of scrutiny of draft Bills on the quality of legislation. [153634]

Mr. Hain: I am convinced that the scrutiny of draft Bills leads to better legislation, but it would be difficult to find objective measures by which to assess the quality of legislation and the changes made following pre-legislative scrutiny.

Gunpowder Plot

37. **Mr. Brady:** To ask the Leader of the House what plans he has made for the House to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot. [153635]

Mr. Hain: A group of officials from both Houses are developing a proposal for an exhibition concerning the Gunpowder Plot to be held in Westminster Hall during 2005. It is hoped that the proposal will be put to the House of Commons Commission, and to the Westminster Hall authorities, in March.

Modernisation Committee

39. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will propose to the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons that it examine ways of simplifying House documents. [153637]

Mr. Hain: I am aware that many Members find the form of some House documents inaccessible and I believe there is scope for further modernisation. The Modernisation Committee is considering the accessibility of the House's publications in its current inquiry on Parliament's engagement with the public, and may wish to return to the subject in the future.

Standing Committees

40. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will reduce the number of Standing Committees in which Government Bills have precedence. [153638]

Mr. Hain: I have no plans to propose such a change to the Standing Orders.

When circumstances require it, the Government gives precedence to a Private Member's Bill in a Standing Committee where Government Bills are entitled to precedence.

Remembrance Wreaths

Mr. Gray: To ask the Leader of the House whether the cost of poppy wreaths laid by hon. Members on Remembrance Sunday is an allowable expense against the incidental expenses provision. [153351]

Mr. Hain: No, but if the hon. Member wishes, it is open to him to make representations to the Advisory Panel on Members' Allowances, who advise on detailed rules for the incidental expenses provision and other allowances.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Witnesses

27. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures the Government have taken to encourage and support victims and witnesses of crimes to give evidence in court. [153656]

Mr. Leslie: Last July, the Government published a National Strategy setting out steps we are taking to deliver improved services to victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system. At its heart is the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill, introduced last November, which contains a range of measures aimed at encouraging more witnesses to come to court and give evidence.

Supreme Court

29. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the locations being considered for a new supreme court. [153658]

Mr. Leslie: A wide range of options for the location of the new Supreme Court is being considered, both commercial sites and those already on the Government estate. An evaluation is currently being conducted to identify the preferred building solution. Until this process has been completed, it could be prejudicial to our commercial position to disclose details.

Industrial Action

30. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent industrial action within the Department. [153659]

Mr. Lammy: Members of the PCS union in the DCA were called out on strike on 29 and 30 January. The Department had contingency plans in place, and this ensured that the impact on overall levels of service was minimised.

Community Legal Service

31. **Ms Keeble:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are being taken to develop the Community Legal Service. [153660]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission, on behalf of my Department, is examining new ways of delivering services through the Partnership Initiative

Budget and Methods of Delivery Pilots. These programmes will increase access to provision of legal and advice services for those most in need. An independent review is taking place to evaluate the impact of the CLS after three years of live operation. The report is due by 31 March 2004. Informed by the report's recommendations, Ministers will then decide how to build on the success of the CLS since its introduction.

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the current backlog of cases is in the Community Legal Service. [153357]

Mr. Lammy: I take the 'backlog of cases' to mean the applications for civil representation received by the Legal Services Commission but not yet processed. The figures as at 30 January 2004 were as follows:

Family applications: 2,667

Non-Family applications: 584

Civil amendments/authorities applications: 2,313

Emergency applications: 346

For comparison purposes, the average number of applications received per week is currently as follows:

Family applications: 2,133

Non-Family applications: 522

Civil amendments/authorities applications: 3,210

Emergency applications: 989

Anti-social Behaviour Orders

32. **Claire Ward:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what training and guidance the Lord Chancellor is giving to magistrates on the implementation of Anti-social Behaviour Orders. [153661]

Mr. Leslie: The Judicial Studies Board (JSB) issued a set of magistrates' training materials addressing the original anti-social behaviour provisions in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The training materials were revised and reissued in November 2002 and again in May 2003.

Fines (East Sussex)

33. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the collection of fines imposed by magistrates' courts. [153665]

Mr. Leslie: Following the action plan I announced last June to improve fine enforcement performance, clear progress has been made and MCCs are on track to hit the 75 per cent. payment rate target set for this year.

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs, what percentage of fines handed down by courts in East Sussex were collected in the last year for which figures are available. [153480]

Mr. Leslie: Information on fines imposed and collected is provided by the 42 magistrates courts committees (MCCs) in England and Wales. Separate data of fines handed down by courts in East Sussex are not available.

As set out in the report "Magistrates' Courts Business Returns, Annual Report 2002–2003" published on 25 June 2003, Sussex Magistrates Courts Committee's payment rate was 62 per cent.—£3,958,078 was collected from a total of £6,402,558 for enforcement in Sussex.

Charitable Trusts

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs for what reason individual trustees have to disclose their date of birth when making the annual return to the Charity Commission. [154374]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

This is a matter for the Charity Commission as the Government Department responsible for the regulation of charities in England and Wales. The Chief Charity Commissioner will write to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Electoral Law

Simon Hughes: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the procedure for declaration of donations by independent candidates in elections. [153657]

Mr. Leslie: The Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 established a new system for governing the regular disclosure of donations to registered political parties, a system which did not extend to independent candidates as—by definition—they have no organised party base behind them. Nevertheless, all individuals are required separately by the Representation of the People Act 1983 to record election expenses and campaign income received from the moment they officially become election candidates, whether party nominees or independents. Donations of more than 50 have to be reported in these election expenses returns to Returning Officers.

Law Commission Reports

Dr. Palmer: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Government will respond to *(a)* the Law Commission report on limitation of actions, ref. (2001) Law Com No. 270, *(b)* the consultation issued in September 2002 on the Law Commission report on third party rights against insurers, ref. Law Com No. 272, *(c)* claims for wrongful deaths, ref. (1999) Law Com No. 263 and *(d)* liability for psychiatric injury ref. (1998) Law Com No. 249. [153415]

Mr. Lammy: The information is as follows:

(a) In July 2002, the Government announced their acceptance in principle of the recommendations for reform of the 1980 Act contained in the Law Commission report "Limitation of Actions", subject to further consideration of certain aspects. Legislation will be introduced to implement those recommendations which are accepted when an opportunity arises.

(b) The Government will publish the post-consultation report on Third Parties—Rights Against Insurers this month.

(c) and *(d)* The Government are currently considering the proposals in the Law Commission reports on damages in light of developments since their publication, with a view to consulting further as appropriate.

Legal Aid

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the current *(a)* method and *(b)* level of funding for legal aid; and if he will make a statement. [153353]

Mr. Lammy: My Department and the Legal Services Commission are continually reviewing the methods and levels of funding for legal aid, to ensure that those who need help the most continue to receive help while providing the best value for money for the taxpayer. In addition, my Department formally announced in June a review of supply, demand and purchasing arrangements within the legal aid system. Due to concern that there could be a shortage of high quality legal aid lawyers, the review will establish the costs, fees and conditions necessary to attract and maintain well-qualified legal aid lawyers. The report by the consultants conducting the review was received in December 2003. It addressed alternative procurement methods for legal services. The final report is about to be published.

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people used legal aid in the last year for which figures are available. [153355]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission is unable to answer the question in the form requested as its systems record the number of acts of assistance rather than the number of clients assisted, which is not necessarily reflective of the number of individuals involved. The total acts of assistance for 2002–03 was 2,658,000.

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of the legal aid budget in 2003–04 has been spent on criminal cases. [153356]

Mr. Lammy: In the present financial year 2003–04, to December 2003, legal aid expenditure on criminal cases amounted to 56 per cent. of total legal aid expenditure.

Legal Services

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of enabling providers other than solicitors to offer legal services directly to the public. [153358]

Mr. Lammy: The Government have commissioned an independent review of the regulation of legal services aimed at promoting competition and innovation and improving services for consumers. We are reviewing future demand for legal services and the suppliers needed particularly in the publicly funded sector. We have already decided to open up the probate market to new providers, which should enable consumers to benefit from better and more cost effective services. A full regulatory impact assessment of opening up the probate market will be provided when commencement orders are laid before Parliament.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact of general practitioner fees on deterring those on low incomes from appealing against a benefits decision; and if he will make a statement. [153376]

Maria Eagle: General Practitioners (GPs) have an important role in providing advice on fitness for work, and supporting the recovery and rehabilitation of their patients; however, there is no need for a person to have evidence from their GP in order to appeal a benefit decision, and GPs are under no statutory obligation to provide medical evidence to their patients for the purposes of an appeal.

Appeal tribunals carry out an independent judicial function and will have available the medical evidence on a person's file, including the reports from Medical Services' doctors; in many cases a person's file will often already include factual information provided by their GP.

Carer's Allowance

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* England and Wales receive carer's allowance. [152809]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is in the following table.

Pensioners in receipt of Carers Allowance, at 31 August 2003

	In payment
East Midlands	1,590
England	18,360
Wales	1,400

Notes:
1. Figures taken from a 100 per cent. sample at 31 August 2003.
2. Pensioners are defined as those aged 60/65+ at 31 August 2003.
3. Figures have been given for all people with Carers Allowance in payment.

Source:
IAD Information Centre.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many appeals against refusal of Disability Living Allowance have been considered by the Appeals Service in each of the last 12 months in *(a)* the Angus constituency, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the rest of the United Kingdom; [152570]

(2) how many successful appeals there have been against refusal of Disability Living Allowance in each of the last 12 months in *(a)* the Angus constituency, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the rest of the UK. [152571]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Michael Weir, dated 10 February 2004:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions regarding:

1) the number of appeals against the refusal of disability living allowance that have been considered by the Appeals Service in each of the last 12 months in (a) the Angus constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the rest of the United Kingdom

2) the number of successful appeals there have been against the refusal of disability living allowance in each of the last 12 months in (a) the Angus constituency, (b) Scotland and (c) the rest of the United Kingdom.

The information is not available in the requested format. However such information as is available is attached in two tables. The first table shows disability living allowance appeals lodged, received, cleared at hearing and cleared in favour of the appellant in Scotland; the second table gives the same figures for Great Britain.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Disability Living Allowance Appeals lodged and received by the Appeals Service: January 2003 to December 2003, by month

Scotland[1]

	Total DLA claimants: 2003	*Lodged*	*Received*	*Cleared at hearing*	*Cleared in favour of appellant*	*Percentage cleared in favour of appellant*
Year 2003		*12,565*	*13,900*	*11,805*	*6,720*	*56.9*
January 2003		1,040	1,125	1,075	630	58.6
February 2003	273,700	1,190	1,020	1,015	585	57.6
March 2003		1,165	1,205	940	575	61.2
April 2003		1,065	1,020	995	570	57.3
May 2003	277,700	1,140	970	960	570	59.4
June 2003		1,250	1,150	1,080	625	57.9
July 2003		1,190	1,015	930	540	58.1
August 2003	281,200	1,220	1,180	885	470	53.1
September 2003		1,265	1,270	935	500	53.5
October 2003		1,255	1,485	1,085	590	54.4
November 2003		715	1,230	1,095	610	55.7
December 2003		70	1,230	810	455	56.2

[1] Scotland figures are those of the regional centre—Glasgow

Great Britain[1]

	Total DLA claimants: 2003	*Lodged*	*Received*	*Cleared at hearing*	*Cleared in favour of appellant*	*Percentage cleared in favour of appellant*
Year 2003		*74,775*	*83,505*	*69,880*	*36,850*	*52.7*
January 2003		6,510	7,795	6,050	3,160	52.2
February 2003	2,468,900	7,400	6,595	5,615	3,015	53.7
March 2003		6,970	7,215	6,390	3,570	55.9
April 2003		6,445	6,040	5,665	3,060	54.0
May 2003	2,497,600	6,275	5,905	6,035	3,205	53.1
June 2003		7,125	6,390	6,030	3,300	54.7
July 2003		7,660	7,015	5,890	3,170	53.8
August 2003	2,527,700	6,925	6,105	5,480	2,855	52.1
September 2003		7,415	7,660	5,915	3,050	51.6
October 2003		7,250	8,720	6,130	3,100	50.6
November 2003		4,155	7,175	5,895	2,965	50.3
December 2003		645	6,890	4,785	2,400	50.2

[1] The "Great Britain" figure will include a small number of cases from outside Great Britain. The Appeals Service hears appeals for Great Britain, not the United Kingdom.

Notes:

1. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
2. Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest five, except for total DLA claimants (2003), which are rounded to the nearest hundred, and are only available quarterly.
4. The information for Angus parliamentary constituency is not available.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

Hepatitis C

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he plans to propose legislation to prevent people eligible for compensation under the ex-gratia hepatitis C payment scheme losing their social security benefits. [152525]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* Amendments to existing regulations are being prepared to ensure that any payments received under the Hepatitis C Ex-Gratia Payment Scheme are disregarded for the purposes of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Pension Credit. Proposals for the Housing

Benefit and Council Tax Benefit regulations were sent to the Local Authority Associations for consultation on 23 January. The regulations will be laid before Parliament once all necessary procedures have been completed, and an announcement will be made in due course.

Logic Software

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) when the new Logic Integrated Medical Assessment software will be made available for public access; and if he will make a statement; [153434]

(2) if he will make a statement on the capability of the Logic Integrated Medical Assessment software to assess claimants whose condition is variously assessed as physical, mental or both in origin according to different authorities; [153436]

(3) if he will make a statement on the capability of the Logic Integrated Medical Assessment software to assess claimants with symptoms which differ widely from the accepted definition of the client's condition; [153437]

(4) what assessment he has made of the implications of tying the Personal Capability Assessment into the Logic Integrated Medical Assessment software for which SchlumbergerSema own the copyright; what assessment he has made of the impact on the contract renewal process in 2005; and if he will make a statement. [153438]

Maria Eagle: The Logic Integrated Medical Assessment (LiMA) software, developed by Medical Services, supports doctors who have been trained and approved to carry out Incapacity Benefit Personal Capability Assessments. It is based on fully researched, evidence-based medical protocols providing reliable, up to date medical opinion on the conditions most often seen in people claiming Incapacity Benefit. LiMA guides the doctor through the medical assessment process, prompting appropriate questions and ensuring thorough and appropriate assessment of the customer's physical and/or mental conditions.

LiMA analyses data about the individual customer, which the doctor has input following interview, observation, and focused clinical examination; and presents the doctor with a logical choice of descriptors that are consistent with the data and with up to date medical knowledge. Doctors can use clinical judgement to override the descriptor choices suggested by LiMA, but they must provide full justification for doing so.

The LiMA software is only functional as an interactive process during a medical examination for the Personal Capability Assessment. It cannot be used independently of the process, and is therefore not accessible to the public. As an internal guidance system it does not fall within Open Government guidelines on access to information.

The medical protocols that support LiMA are drawn from standard medical texts available through any public library.

SchlumbergerSema (now Atos Origin) do not own the copyright of the LiMA software. The current Medical Services contract provides that Intellectual Property Rights for Evidence Based Medicine and the LiMA software are vested in the Department.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of claimants have been found incapable of work under the Logic Integrated Medical Assessment (LIMA) software since the pilots were introduced; what proportion of claimants were found incapable of work without the use of the LIMA software in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [153435]

Maria Eagle: The information is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

New Deal for Young People

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have entered the New Deal for Young People *(a)* four times, *(b)* five times, *(c)* six times, *(d)* seven times, *(e)* eight times, *(f)* nine times and *(g)* 10 times or more; whether these people are included in the long-term unemployed statistics; and if he will make a statement. [152668]

Mr. Browne: The information is in the table.

New Deal for Young People (NDYP)—Number of people who have entered the programme four times and more

Number of times on the programme	*Number of people*
Four	5,680
Five	400
Six	20

Notes:
1. There are no recorded instances of people participating in NDYP more than six times.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

People on the New Deal for Young People (NDYP) Gateway receive Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and, unless they have joined under the early entry criteria, will be counted in the claimant unemployment statistics as in receipt of JSA for six months or more. People on one of the four NDYP options are undertaking full-time activity designed to address their barriers to work and receive a New Deal allowance rather than JSA. People participating in NDYP follow-through receive JSA and will, in most cases, be counted in the claimant statistics as in receipt of JSA for up to six months.

Unemployment statistics are also collected through the Labour Force Survey (LFS). People on NDYP Gateway and follow-through will be classified as International Labour Organisation (ILO) unemployed if they satisfy the ILO conditions of being available for and actively seeking work. Those on NDYP options may be counted as in employment, ILO unemployed, or economically inactive depending on their labour market activity. The duration of those counted as ILO unemployed reflects a person's own assessment of their period of unemployment.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many participants on the New Deal for Young People full-time education or training option were on courses lasting *(a)* 0–3 months, *(b)* 3–6 months, *(c)* 6–12 months and *(d)* over 12 months, in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [152669]

Mr. Browne: Information on the length of courses undertaken by young people on the New Deal full-time education and training option is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Information on the number of people participating on the New Deal for young people full-time education and training option in the 12 months to September 2003[1], and the duration of time spent on that option, is in the table.

[1] Latest available figures.

New deal for young people full time education and training option

Duration on the option (months)	*Number of people*
0–3	7,940
3–6	10,590
6–12	5,040
12+	190

Note:
It is the policy of New Deal for young people (NDYP) that nobody should be placed on an NDYP full time education and training (FTET) course for longer than a year, and an individual's training on this option is not funded for longer than 12 months. In a small number of cases, people may leave their FTET option early, return to claim jobseekers allowance within 13 weeks, and then complete this option. This can result in some individuals appearing to be on the FTET option for longer than 12 months, even though their time on the option would be a maximum of 12 months.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made in co-ordination with HM Inland Revenue to track whether leavers from New Deal programmes remain in employment 12 months after leaving; and if he will make a statement. [153458]

Mr. Browne: We announced the launch of the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study on the 16 December. The study will link benefit and programme information held by this Department with employment records from the Inland Revenue and will be used to evaluate the Department's policies for helping people into work and keeping them in work.

The Study will improve our understanding of what happens to people who leave our benefits and programmes, including the New Deal, to enter employment, and will enable us to assess how long they remain in employment.

The Study is now under way and first publication of figures is expected at the end of the year.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average cost per place on each of the four options in the New Deal for Young People was in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [147818]

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when Jobcentre Plus expects to complete its New Deal for Young People unit cost model. [147930]

Mr. Browne: The information is not available.

At the time of my previous answer to the hon. Member for Chesterfield (Paul Holmes) on 17 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 551W, it was anticipated that a unit costing system would now be available to produce reliable cost information on the full range of Jobcentre Plus activities, including information about the cost per place of New Deal for Young People. However, delays in developing the Resource Management System, which included a suite of unit costing systems, mean that at this time we are still unable to carry out this level of detailed costing analysis for Jobcentre Plus and other business units within the Department. A less sophisticated model, which records cost at a less detailed level, is close to completion and is planned to be operational from April 2004.

New Deal for Young People has now successfully helped more than 460,000 young people into jobs and continues to represent value for money to the taxpayer.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) who the members of the *(a)* Central Advisory Committee on War Pensions, *(b)* Chaseley Trust, *(c)* Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board, *(d)* Far East (Prisoner of War and Internees) Fund and *(e)* Industrial Injuries Advisory Council were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is; [151357]

(2) who the members of the *(a)* Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority, *(b)* Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation, *(c)* Social Security Advisory Committee and *(d)* War Pensions Committee were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151363]

Maria Eagle: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

The Central Advisory Committee on War Pensions, Chaseley Trust, Far East (Prisoner of War and Internees) Fund, Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation and War Pensions Committees fall under the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. Information on these bodies has also been placed in the Library.

Staff Salaries

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* lowest, *(b)* highest and *(c)* average salary is for full-time members of staff in (i) his Department, (ii) Jobcentre Plus, (iii) the Child Support Agency, (iv) the Pension Service, (v) the Disability and Carers Service and (vi) the Appeals Service. [151446]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the following table:

Lowest, highest and average salaries in DWP, 2003

£

DWP Business	Lowest	Highest	Average
DWP Corporate Centre	9,900	124,800	23,549
Jobcentre Plus	9,900	124,800	19,047
Child Support Agency	9,900	124,800	16,871
The Pension Service	9,900	124,800	17,427
Disability and Carers Service	9,900	124,800	17,363
The Appeals Service	9,900	124,800	17,734
DWP overall	9,900	124,800	18,890

Notes:

1. The lowest salary is the minimum of the Band A (Administrative Assistant) national pay scale on 30 June 2003, before implementation of the proposed 2003 pay award. The highest is the maximum current Senior Civil Service (SCS) salary in DWP as a whole—including the highest in each Business may identify individuals' salaries. They are basic rates and exclude allowances, bonus payments and pension contributions.
2. The average salaries are for staff in grades Band A (AA) to Band G (Grade 6) before implementation of the proposed 2003 pay award, and current SCS salaries. Average salaries include allowances such as recruitment and retention allowance and the employer's occupational pension contribution, but exclude overtime. Data on Permanent Secretaries have been excluded from the table.
3. The figures above encompass all pay zones (national, inner and outer London, and specified locations).

Source:

DWP Payroll Systems (FAMIS and Rebus) as processed by DWP Financial Services (ASAP), October 2003.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the salary bands for full-time members of staff who are on *(a)* clerical support, *(b)* management, *(c)* senior management and *(d)* senior civil service grades in his Department and each of its agencies; and how many staff are employed in each of those bands. [151447]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

Staff numbers and salary bands in DWP 2003

	DWP Corporate Centre staff	Jobcentre Plus staff	Child Support Agency staff	The Pensions Service staff
Clerical support	4,806	46,152	7,262	13,031
Management	5,594	33,673	3,307	6,136
Senior management	631	525	82	126
Senior civil service	135	54	13	23
Total	11,166	80,404	10,664	19,316

	Disability and Carers Service staff	The Appeals Service staff	DWP staff	Minimum salary (£)	Maximum salary (£)
Clerical support	4,331	622	76,204	9,900	18,550
Management	2,538	217	51,465	15,220	34,870
Senior management	31	12	1,407	32,210	60,990
Senior civil service	1	2	228	52,403	124,800
Total	6,901	853	129,304	—	—

Notes:

1. Clerical support covers staff employed in Band A/Administrative Assistant, Typist, Personal Secretary, Band B/Administrative Officer, Typing Manager and Senior Personal Secretary.
2. Management covers staff employed in Band C/Executive Officers, Band D/Higher Executive Officers, Chief Typing Managers, Social Fund Inspectors and Band E/Senior Executive Officers.
3. Senior Management covers staff employed in Band F/Grade 7 and Band G/Grade6.
4. Specialist staff e.g. accountants, lawyers, statisticians and support grades who do not fit within the broad descriptions have been excluded from the above data. Permanent Secretaries have also been excluded.
5. All staff numbers are Whole Time Equivalents.
6. Band minimum and band maximum for staff below SCS are 2002 rates. The 2003 pay settlement has not yet been finalised or fully implemented. For staff below SCS the minimum is the rate for the national payband and the maximum is the rate for the Inner London payband.

Source:

DWP Payroll Systems (Dataview December 2003)

PRIME MINISTER

Honours System

Mr. Mackay: To ask the Prime Minister when firm proposals for the reform of the honours system will be laid before Parliament. [153664]

The Prime Minister: I expect to receive Sir Hayden Phillips' report on his review of the honours system within the next few months. I shall, at the appropriate time, make a statement to Parliament about it.

Iraq

Llew Smith To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of the intelligence document on which he based his conclusion, placed before the Hutton Inquiry by his former director of communications, that Iraq could produce a nuclear weapon in between one and two years; [152532]

(2) pursuant to his answer of 2 February, *Official Report*, column 729, what the original intelligence to which he refers was that the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee relied upon in respect of his acceptance of the proposals made in his e-mail of 19 September 2002; and whether he had been informed of the contents of this intelligence when he authorised his former director of communications to press for changes in the Iraq weapons of mass destruction dossier. [153918]

The Prime Minister: The conclusions on the dossier were those of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) as

both Lord Hutton and the Intelligence and Security Committee have made clear. As Lord Hutton makes clear,

"Mr. John Scarlett, the Chairman of the JIC, had the overall responsibility for the drafting of the dossier".

It has been the practice of successive Governments not to publish intelligence material.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what response he made to the queries posed by the right hon. Member for Dewsbury in her comments on the draft Iraq weapons of mass destruction dossier in September 2002; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [153929]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Newport, West (Paul Flynn) on 18 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 870W and on 15 October 2003, *Official Report*, columns 233–34W.

As Lord Hutton found in his report

"the dossier was prepared and drafted by a small team of the assessment staff of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). Mr. John Scarlett, the Chairman of the JIC, had the overall responsibility for the drafting of the dossier. The dossier, which included the 45 minutes claim, was issued by the Government on 24 September 2002 with the full approval of the JIC".

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what the source was of the 45-minute claim about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; and whether this intelligence information was shared with allied intelligence services, including those of the United States, between its receipt by the United Kingdom and its use in the Iraq weapons of mass destruction dossier. [153980]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 18 September 2003, *Official Report*, columns 952–53W.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister whether he was informed of the e-mail by Mr. Jonathan Powell, published on page 657 of Lord Hutton's Report, on the evidence of an imminent threat from Iraq contained in the Draft Iraq Weapons of Mass Destruction Dossier, dated 17 September 2002, before he authorised the publication of the final version of the dossier. [153996]

The Prime Minister: No. As Lord Hutton said in his Report, the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) had overall responsibility for the dossier of 24 September and accepted only drafting suggestions which were consistent with the intelligence known to the JIC.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Prime Minister whether *(a)* the Secretary of State for Defence and *(b)* other Ministers informed him (i) orally and (ii) in writing that they believed the weapons of mass destruction which could be deployed within 45 minutes were battlefield weapons; [154082]

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 772, when he indicated when it had come to his attention that the 45 minute assertion related to battlefield mortar shells or small calibre weaponry; [154017]

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Prime Minister on what date he first became aware to which Iraqi weapons the 45-minutes claim in the Iraq's weapons of mass destruction dossier applied. [154181]

The Prime Minister: No. As my Official Spokesman said on Thursday 5 February, I first became aware of this around the time that the Intelligence and Security Committee had been examining the issue.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister whether the Iraqi regime was warned *(a)* before and *(b)* during the recent conflict that any use of battlefield chemical and biological weapons would meet with a response using (i) weapons of mass destruction and (ii) nuclear weapons. [154252]

The Prime Minister: No. The Government have made clear in the past that we reserve the right to respond appropriately to any use of such weapons, using the range of options available to us. The UK does not possess biological or chemical weapons. We would never use our nuclear weapons in a manner contrary to international law.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence gave to the hon. Member for Newark (Patrick Mercer) on 3 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 578.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister whether he was informed of the possible range of battlefield weapons of mass destruction; and what types of armament he understood to be defined as battlefield weapons. [154253]

The Prime Minister: Yes. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Howarth) on 15 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 515W.

TREASURY

Atrazine

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what quantities of Atrazine have been imported through each British port in the last 12 months. [153909]

John Healey: Atrazine is classified in commodity code 29336910, which is a set of related chemicals. The full description for this group is: Atrazine(ISO); propazine (ISO); hexahydro-1,3,5-trinitro-1,3,5-triazine (hexogen, trimethylenetrinitramine).

Imports of goods under this commodity code from non-EU countries through British ports in the last 12 months, for which figures are available are shown in the following table.

Imports, December 2002 to November 2003

Port	*Net mass (kgs)*
Liverpool	2,093
Felixstowe	40,000
Total	42,093

Source:
Overseas Trade Statistics, HMCE

Benefit and Tax Errors

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on incompatibilities between working tax credit and council tax benefits processing systems, which may have resulted in errors in assessing eligibility. [152253]

Dawn Primarolo: Local authorities have made changes to their IT systems to ensure that working tax credit and child tax credit are taken into account when assessing entitlement to council tax benefit. Taxpayers are required to notify their local authority of the amount of tax credits that they receive. Arrangements are in place between the Inland Revenue and local authorities to enable relevant information about tax credits to be provided when requested.

Benefit Fraud

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of benefit fraud have been identified by Inland Revenue payroll cleanse operations in each of the last five years; how many of these were referred to the Department for Work and Pensions; and if he will make a statement. [153289]

Dawn Primarolo: When the Inland Revenue Payroll Cleanse Unit identifies potential benefit fraud cases they refer them all to the Department for Work and Pensions for their action. The numbers of potential fraud cases referred over the last five years are as follows:

	Number
1999–2000	21,151
2000–01	19,297
2001–02	7,102
2002–03	11,336
2003 to 31 January 2004	11,486

Decent Homes Standard

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what effect he estimates the Inland Revenue ruling of 24 October 2003 will have on Bridgend's ability to achieve the 2010 decent homes standard; and whether additional Government support will be available to meet this target; [154228]

(2) what estimate he has made of the effect on the welfare of tenants of Valleys to Coast Housing Ltd. if the Inland Revenue's ruling of 24 October 2003 is upheld. [154229]

Dawn Primarolo: On 24 October the Inland Revenue gave a preliminary view on the tax implications of contracts developed by a major accountancy firm. Discussions are continuing.

Health Statistics

David Davis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the latest figures for the death rate from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease are for the (i) East Riding of Yorkshire and (ii) United Kingdom; and what they were in 1997. [154166]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to David Davis, dated 10 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning the latest figures for the death rate from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease for the (i) East Riding of Yorkshire and (ii) United Kingdom; and what they were in 1997. (154166)

Death rates are included in the attached table for 1997 and 2002, the latest year for which figures are currently available.

Death rates[1] from cancer and coronary heart disease[2] in the East Riding of Yorkshire local authority and the United Kingdom,[3] 1997 and 2002[4]

	Death rates per 100,000 population	
	1997	*2002*
Cancer		
East Riding of Yorkshire	194	176
United Kingdom	203	189
Coronary Heart Disease		
East Riding of Yorkshire	153	111
United Kingdom	163	128

[1] Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.

[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for1997, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2002. The codes used are listed below: Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-9 140–208; ICD-10 C00-C97; Coronary Heart Disease—ICD-9 410–414; ICD-10 120–125.

[3] Usual residents of these areas.

[4] Deaths occurring in each calendar year in England and Wales, and deaths registered in each calendar year in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Higher Education Spending

Mr. Collins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the right hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend (Mr. Brown) in the last 10 days regarding future higher education spending; and what the outcome was of those discussions. [153695]

Mr. Boateng: Treasury Ministers have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals, including Members of both Houses of Parliament, as part of the process of policy development and analysis. As with previous Administrations, it is not this Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Ministerial Code.

Income Tax

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money was raised from income tax in *(a)* the City of Edinburgh local authority area, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the United Kingdom in 2003. [153374]

Dawn Primarolo: The most recent information on income tax liability is given in the following table.

	Income tax liability (£ billion) in 2000–01
(a) City of Edinburgh UA	1.0
(b) Scotland	7.3
(c) United Kingdom	105.6

Estimates are based upon the Survey of Personal Incomes 2000–01, and represents liability arising in that year.

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the percentage collection rate of income tax in *(a)* the City of Edinburgh local authority area, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the UK for 2003; and if he will make a statement. [153375]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue does not hold details of the percentage collection rate of income tax on a local or regional basis.

The following table shows the national percentage rate as at the end October 2002. These are the latest figures available. The Department's accounting year runs to the end of October and the figures are a snapshot of the position at that time. The figures also include arrears of income tax carried forward from earlier years.

Income tax	
Total liabilities (£ million)	125,701.3
Receipts (£ million)	120,890.3
Percentage collected	96.17

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money was raised from income tax in *(a)* the North West and *(b)* Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [153879]

Dawn Primarolo: The most recent information on income tax liability is given in the table.

Income tax liability in 2000–01

	£ billion
(a) North West	9.3
(b) Lancashire	1.6

Estimates are based upon the Survey of Personal Incomes 2000–01.

Ivory

Mr. Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many prosecutions have resulted from seizures of ivory and ivory products in each of the last five years. [153055]

John Healey: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the right hon. Member for Maidstone and The Weald (Miss Widdecombe) on 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1082W.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what disposal methods have been used for ivory tusks and products seized by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise since 1999. [153056]

John Healey: Ivory tusks and products seized by Customs are destroyed by incineration, apart from small quantities donated on request for medical and other scientific research or to museums and zoos for educational purposes. In addition, Customs retain a few samples for public education and staff training purposes.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 496W, on ivory, what type of ivory products were seized; and what information he has collated on the country of origin in each case. [153093]

John Healey: I very much regret that my answer of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 354W, inadvertently contained an incorrect figure. The table gives the corrected information.

	Ivory tusks		*Other items containing ivory*		
Calendar year	*Number of seizures*	*Number of items seized*	*Number of seizures*	*Number of items seized*	*Total number of seizures*
2003	7	22	23	126	30
2002	4	5	18	74	22
2001	6	8	27	649	33
2000	6	19	19	84	25
1999	7	12	11	13	18
Total	30	66	98	946	128

The 1,012 ivory items seized by HM Customs and Excise since 1999 consisted of the following:

	Number
Elephant tusks	17
Knives	2
Jewellery	66
Statues	33
Carved ivory	44
Piano keys	411
Other parts of musical instruments	8
Furniture	7
Other ivory pieces	258

In addition, Customs seized the following items, which are treated as ivory for the purposes of recording seizures:

	Number
Rhino horn	1
Walrus tusk	3
Hippo tusk	15
Other tusks	30
Hippo teeth	117

Information on the country of origin of the products seized is not available.

National Insurance

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of those who are due to receive delayed deficiency notices from the National Insurance Contributions Office for each year since 2000 have received the notices; and if he will make a statement. [153285]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has started writing to people whose national insurance account shows shortfalls for the years 1996–97 to 2001–02. As

the letters may cover any or all of those years, it is not possible to identify separately the letters which relate just to the years since 2000. In total, 10.2 million letters will be issued. As of 1 February 2004, £1.2 million had been sent out. It is anticipated that all letters will be sent out by September.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether investigations into the submission by employers of *(a)* incorrect and *(b)* invalid national insurance numbers have ever been suspended; and if he will make a statement. [153286]

Dawn Primarolo: Such investigations are carried out on a daily basis as part of the Inland Revenue's normal work procedures to ensure that, where possible, national insurance contributions sent in by employers are properly recorded on employees' individual national insurance accounts. There has not been any suspension of this activity.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many end of year returns which could not be linked to a national insurance account have been left unallocated at the end of each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [153287]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue estimate that around 55 million end of year contribution returns are received each year. Around 4 per cent. of these contain incomplete or incorrect identifying details and cannot be allocated to an individual national insurance account without further information. Most of these non-matching items have no or little impact on people's benefit entitlements. The Inland Revenue works with employers to trace and match contributions, concentrating on cases where they are likely to have a significant impact on entitlement.

The number of end of year returns not linked to a national insurance account as at 31 March 2003 is given in the table. The numbers outstanding as at 31 March 2002 and earlier years are not available.

	Number
1997–98	1,776,278
1998–99	2,690,708
1999–2000	2,205,116
2000–01	2,312,424
2001–02	2,359,896

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there is a margin of error allowed by the National Insurance Contributions Office when calculating national insurance figures; and if he will make a statement. [153290]

Dawn Primarolo: In the vast majority of cases national insurance records are updated accurately. In some cases where the information received is inaccurate, the Inland Revenue takes all reasonable action to investigate and correct the records, but operates administrative tolerances where the costs of investigating would be excessive compared to the amounts involved. In these cases the amount recorded on the employee's national insurance account always reflects the higher value so that they do not lose out on future benefit entitlement.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what backlogs there are in the handling of national insurance data in the National Insurance Contributions Office; and if he will make a statement. [153291]

Dawn Primarolo: The National Insurance Contributions Office is on track to meet all its targets for processing national insurance data in 2003–04.

Payroll Giving

Sue Doughty: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many employers provided Payroll Giving schemes in *(a)* July 1998 and *(b)* July 2003; [153447]

(2) how many FTSE 250 companies offered Payroll Giving schemes in *(a)* December 1998 and *(b)* December 2003. [153448]

John Healey: Payroll Giving schemes allow employees to make donations to charities directly from their pay packets. The Government introduced improvements to the Payroll Giving scheme in Budget 2000. At that time, a 10 per cent. supplement on all donations made through Payroll Giving schemes was introduced for a three-year period, until April 2003. This was extended until April 2004.

There are no centrally held figures for the number of employers (or FTSE 250 companies) providing Payroll Giving schemes. The Association of Payroll Giving Agencies provides data to the Inland Revenue on the number of new Payroll Giving contracts set up. From these figures, it is estimated that there were 8,947 Payroll Giving schemes at 30 June 1998, which had increased to 12,782 by 30 June 2000. A further 3,299 new schemes had been set up by 30 June 2003. However, this does not give an accurate figure for the number of employers offering schemes as some employers operate more than one scheme and some schemes may be dormant.

The Inland Revenue has measured employee access to Payroll Giving schemes through NOP surveys. In July 1999, this indicated that around one in five employees (5.75 million) had access to a Payroll Giving scheme. In July 2003, the proportion was about the same (one in five), but the growth in employment means that this equates to six million employees.

Research and Development Tax Credit

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to introduce a research and development tax incentive in Northern Ireland. [154124]

Dawn Primarolo: The research and development tax credit is available to companies for qualifying expenditure on research and development, including those in Northern Ireland. As announced at the Pre-Budget Report, following consultation, the Government intend to simplify and extend the coverage of research and development tax credits.

Thalidomide Trust

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to instruct the Inland Revenue to allow the Thalidomide Trust to make all distributions tax exempt under section 329 of the Finance Act 1996. [153527]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue applies the law as set down by Parliament. It would not be appropriate for Ministers to instruct the Inland Revenue to apply the law in a particular way. Discussions between the trustees of the Thalidomide Trust and officials of the Inland Revenue are currently taking place on this issue. While no conclusion has yet been reached the Government believe we should await the outcome of those discussions.

Unemployment

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the rate of unemployment in each *(a)* county and *(b)* Lancashire constituency was in each year since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [153510]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 10 February 2004:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment rates in Lancashire. (153510)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following the standard International Labour Organisation definitions. Table 1 gives unemployment rates for the administrative county of Lancashire for the twelve month period ending February of each year from 1997 to 2002. Comparable information is not available for earlier years. The LFS sample size is too small to give reliable information about unemployment in each constituency in Lancashire.

As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas including Parliamentary Constituencies. Table 2 gives the annual average percentage of resident working age population who are ISA claimants in the administrative county of Lancashire and for each Constituency in Lancashire for the years 1996 to 2003. Comparable figures for Counties and Parliamentary Constituencies based on the 1995 boundaries are only available from 1996. The data are not seasonally adjusted.

Table 1—Unemployment rates[1] in the administrative County of Lancashire

Twelve month period ending February	*Per cent*
1997	5.6
1998	4.9
1999	4.2
2000	5.4
2001	4.4
2002	3.8

[1] Unemployed as a percentage of the economically active population

Note:
These LFS estimates have not been interim-adjusted to reflect the 2001 Census results

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2—Percentage of resident working age population claiming JSA annual averages[1]

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Administrative county								
Lancashire	4.2	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.1	2.0	1.9
Parliamentary constituencies[2]								
Blackpool North and Fleetwood[3]	5.9	4.7	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.2	2.8	2.6
Burnley	3.6	2.9	2.6	2.9	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.0
Chorley	3.8	2.6	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.4
Fylde	2.7	1.9	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.2
Hyndburn	3.6	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.0
Lancaster and Wyre	3.6	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.5	1.3
Pendle	3.8	2.8	2.6	2.9	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.1
Preston	7.1	5.5	4.6	4.3	3.9	3.4	3.3	3.1
Ribble Valley	2.2	1.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8
Rossendale and Darwen[4]	3.3	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.2	2.0	1.9	1.7
South Ribble	3.2	2.2	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3
West Lancashire	5.8	4.6	4.3	4.2	3.5	3.1	3.1	2.9

[1] The percentage of resident working age population of an area. The population denominators are based on output area data from the 2001 census.
[2] Based on 1995 constituency boundaries available from January 1996
[3] Part in Blackpool Unitary Authority
[4] Part in Blackburn with Darwen Unitary Authority

Note:
The data are not seasonally adjusted

Source:
Jobcentre Plus administrative system

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Brownfield Land

Mr. Peter Atkinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which brownfield sites in Northumberland are on English Partnerships' Register. [153812]

Keith Hill: The English Partnerships Register is based on the National Land Use Database (NLUD) of Previously Developed Land, which shows an estimated total of 600 hectares of brownfield land in Northumberland. Of the total, 350 hectares are vacant or derelict and 250 hectares are currently in use but are known to have potential for redevelopment. Information on individual sites is owned by the local authorities which

supplied it and is available to public sector bodies through the NLUD website on signature of a licence. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working with English Partnerships, the Information and Development Agency (IDeA) and Ordnance Survey on a system of licensing which will make the information generally available on similar terms.

Care Homes (Sprinklers)

Ross Cranston: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to take steps to make it compulsory for care homes for the elderly to be installed with sprinklers; and if he will make a statement. [153595]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement given by the Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Mr. Hope), on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 41WS.

Community Projects

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the work of the Active Community Unit; and what its budget is for each financial year from 2001–02 to 2005–06. [152915]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

The Government's commitment to engaging with communities to strengthen civil society and build civil renewal has been reflected in the work of what is now the Active Communities Directorate in the Home Office. Last year, the work of the Active Community Unit was expanded to incorporate a Charities Unit and a Civil Renewal Unit. Through the new Active Communities Directorate, the Home Office aims to build strong, thriving communities where everyone, regardless of age, race or social background has a stake in society.

A vibrant voluntary and community sector is central to delivering this vision. The Government's commitment to work with the sector is set out in the Compact and has been underpinned through recent spending reviews. From 2001 to 2006, an extra £155 million is being invested in supporting volunteering. From 2003 to 2006, an extra £218 million is being invested in strengthening the sector's ability to deliver high quality and effective services. This includes the £125 million futurebuilders programme, which is being distributed by an independent provider under contract to the Home Office. These additional investments are mainly programme spending received by the voluntary and community sector and volunteering initiatives.

The overall budget for the work on Active Communities for each financial year from 2001–02 to 2005–06, rounded to the nearest million pounds, is as follows:

£ million

	Core funds	*Spending review commitments*	*Futurebuilders fund*
2001–02	21	25	—
2002–03	22	35	—
2003–04	21	60	10
2004–05	21	63	57
2005–06	21	65	58

Fire Service

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made in the procurement of a replacement radio system for the fire service; when he expects that the contract will be awarded; and when he expects the new system to be operational. [154347]

Mr. Raynsford: Following evaluation of the responses received to the Invitation to Submit Proposals for a radio system for the Fire and Rescue Services, negotiation has begun with those suppliers who were short listed. It is planned to award the Firelink contract in July 2004 with roll-out due to be completed by the end of December 2007.

Housing Development Strategy (Islington)

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the London borough of Islington on a housing development strategy that would ensure an increase in the number of properties for rent by the council and housing associations; and if he will make a statement. [153942]

Keith Hill: I have had no specific discussions with Islington on this issue. Officials at the Government Office for London have recently agreed as fit for purpose Islington's 2004–07 Housing Strategy. This sets out their need for affordable, including social, housing and the steps they are taking to meet the demand.

Islington Council

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of objections to the methods of consultation used by Islington council on an arm's length management organisation; and if he will make a statement. [153945]

Keith Hill: The London borough of Islington applied to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister in January for approval under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985 to delegate its housing management functions to its Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently considering the consultation undertaken by the borough and all the representations received as part of the assessment of this application.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will rank each county council and unitary authority according to the per capita level per authority, listing the grant amount in each case. [154377]

Mr. Raynsford: Two tables have been made available in the Library of the House. The first table shows the per capita 2004–05 formula grant for shire counties, ranked in order. The second table shows the per capita 2004–05 formula grant for unitary authorities (i.e. London boroughs (including the City of London), metropolitan districts, and shire unitary authorities).

Two tables have been provided since shire counties do not provide the same services as unitary authorities. Unitary authorities provide a broadly equivalent service to both shire counties and shire districts in two-tier shire areas.

However care should be taken even when comparing only shire counties or only unitary authorities.

Shire counties that are in areas where Local Government Re-organisation has occurred do not have responsibility for fire services, whereas the other shire counties do.

The City of London has additional responsibility for police services within its area and the Isle of Wight and Isles of Scilly have responsibility for fire services within their areas. Within the London area, responsibility for public transport lies with Transport for London.

Social Housing

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action his Department has taken to ensure that all social sector homes have *(a)* adequate loft and cavity wall insulation, *(b)* an efficient heating system and *(c)* a minimum energy efficiency rating. [153278].

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has a Public Service Agreement to provide that all social sector tenants have the opportunity of a decent home by 2010. The decent homes standard has four criteria, one of which relates to thermal comfort and requires the home to have efficient heating as well as effective insulation.

Delivery of the decent homes target will involve carrying out improvement works to the thermal comfort of 1.26 million dwellings and will ensure that all social sector homes have effective insulation and efficient heating. Of these 77 per cent. fail on insulation, 17 per cent. fail on heating and 6 per cent. fail on both.

In addition, all new social sector homes grant-funded by the Housing Corporation are required to achieve an EcoHomes 'Pass' rating, which goes beyond the minimum standards for energy efficiency of all new developments that are set out in part L of the Building Regulations. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to further amendments to Part L which will increase the energy efficiency of new dwellings and which should be in place by 2005.

There is no requirement that social homes meet a minimum energy efficiency rating.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what studies his Department has commissioned into the standards of *(a)* insulation and *(b)* heating systems in social sector housing. [153279]

Keith Hill: The English House Condition Survey provides a comprehensive range of data on insulation and heating standards in the social sector stock. The latest data are from the 2001 survey. Information from the 2002–03 combined survey will be available in November 2004.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the adequacy of the decent homes standard set for social housing. [153280]

Keith Hill: When the decent homes target was first set, a definition was established so that those responsible for delivery were working to a common outcome, resources required for delivery could be established and progress tracked. A decent home is one which:

- meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing (fitness standard)
- is in a reasonable state of repair
- has reasonably modern facilities and services
- provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

The standard is a minimum standard. It is the standard that triggers action and is not the standard that we expect work to be done to. The guidance on implementation of the standard encourages landlords, in partnership with their tenants, to go beyond the basic requirements of the decent homes standard where possible.

Resources available to tackle poor condition housing are limited and therefore we focussed the definition on the essentials to provide a warm, wind and weather tight home.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* council houses and flats and *(b)* social housing units were built in each of the last 25 years. [153596]

Keith Hill: National numbers, based on reports from local authorities and National House-Building Council, are published in Housing Statistics 2003 (Tables 2.5a-2.5f), a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received concerning the proportion of social housing to be included in new developments in Greater London; and if he will make a statement. [153947]

Keith Hill: The issue is frequently raised in the context of individual planning cases and sometimes in relation to borough unitary development plans and associated supplementary planning guidance. The issue was discussed at the examination in public of the draft London Plan in April 2003. Since then, the House Builders' Federation have raised the issue in discussions with officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Travellers

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in circumstances when unauthorised developments by travellers and gipsies are permitted by planning inspectors or the Secretary of State because of the traveller and gipsy status of the inhabitants, what requirements his Department places on those inhabitants to maintain a traveller or gipsy lifestyle; and what this lifestyle must consist of. [153723]

Keith Hill: For the purposes of planning law, a gipsy is a person of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin. Nomadic implies a connection between the person's travels and their means of making or seeking their livelihood. Gipsy status may be a material consideration taken into account in deciding whether to grant planning permission for a caravan site established without it. Planning permission is not simply granted because of the gipsy status of the inhabitants. Court decisions mean that nomadic and gipsy status are not necessarily lost where travel is periodic, seasonal or ceases temporarily. However, a person who retired

permanently from travelling for whatever reason (e.g. ill-health) would cease to be a gipsy for planning law purposes and would be in breach of a planning condition limiting the use of a caravan site to gipsies. Enforcement of planning control is a matter for the local planning authority.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bribery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what procedures the UK Trade and Investment Business Group has in place to prevent corruption and bribery on projects supported under the Overseas Projects Fund. [151514]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Overseas Projects Fund (OPF) provides financial assistance towards the pre-contractual costs incurred by British companies when pursuing major overseas projects. The scheme closed to new applications on 7 July 2003. British companies receiving assistance under the OPF Scheme must provide UKTI with regular reports of their pre-contractual activities and submit auditor's reports in respect of the claims for reimbursement of the eligible costs they incur. In any cases where the claims give rise to any need for further clarification this is sought from the company prior to making a payment. Before the award of OPF, the post in the country where the project is located provides UKTI with an evaluation of both the project and the company involved.

UKTI staff administering the OPF Scheme have internal guidance on bribery and corruption, details of which are in my reply to the hon. Member on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 876W.

Broadband

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans Ofcom has to support alternative service providers offering sustainable broadband solutions by amending the charges applied to these providers for activation and service migration in the broadband market. [152394]

Mr. Timms: These are matters for the Office of Communications (Ofcom). I have, therefore, asked the Chief Executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the Chief Executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the means by which community broadband networks can access advice and financial support from her Department for their campaigns. [154120]

Mr. Timms: The joint DTI/Defra Rural Broadband Unit has recently published a toolkit to help rural communities and businesses understand the issues surrounding access to broadband.

DTI and Defra are supporting the Community Broadband Network (CBN) which aims to offer a collaboration network for those setting up community-owned projects. The CBN is a partnership that includes RuralNet and the Phone Co-op and will create a market place to help bring together those who need advice with those who have the experience.

DTI are supporting a "broadband place" on the UK Villages website. This will see a dedicated broadband 'space' on all pages serving the 32,000 communities on that website and will enable communities around the UK to share advice and experiences of broadband.

The regional development agencies and devolved administrations are able to offer support and advice for community broadband campaigns. For example, the South-East England Development Agency has produced an online toolkit to support the development of wireless community broadband networks. htto:// www.seeonline.net/broadband/communityselfhelp.

Competitiveness (Environmental Targets)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the target for the reduction of carbon emissions on the overall competitiveness of UK industry. [153541]

Mr. Timms: The Department has published a number of assessments of the impact of meeting carbon reduction targets on the competitiveness of UK industry. Modelling work undertaken for the 2003 energy White Paper looked at the implications of 20 per cent. and 30 per cent. reductions in CO_2 emissions by 2020. The assessment is available at annex F of www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/phase2.pdf.

Further work has also recently been published looking at the trade and regional implications of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme which is due to start in January 2005. This is available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/euetsimplications.pdf.

Electricity Supply

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of *(a)* projected supplies and *(b)* projected usage of electricity for the coming years; and if she will make a statement. [153369]

Mr. Timms: Latest DTI projections of future electricity demand are set out in updated energy projections published in July 2003 and available on the DTI website: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/projections.pdf.

NETA places strong incentives on suppliers to contract for their customers' demand and also places strong incentives on generators to deliver the power that they have contracted to deliver.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to secure the continuity of the electricity supply. [153922]

Mr. Timms: The Government attach great importance to reliable electricity supplies—reliable supply is one of the four key goals of energy policy as set out in the Government's Energy White Paper.

We are confident that a market-based approach for provision of electricity will work—there has been evidence of that this year, as mothballed plant has been brought back in response to earlier projections that of inadequate capacity. Indeed, National Grid Transco recently announced that the winter generation margin had increased to 21.6 per cent., indicating the ability of the electricity market to deliver secure supplies, including the maintenance of secure supplies during the recent cold weather.

If the market is to work, it needs confidence that Government will not intervene—we have said we will not intervene in the market except in extreme circumstances, to protect safety. That remains our position. But we are not complacent and, through JESS, we and Ofgem continually monitor developments and look for ways to improve the operation of the market.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has in place to ensure that the power cuts that affected *(a)* areas of London and Kent on 28 August 2003 and *(b)* the West Midlands on 5 September 2003 will not re-occur. [153921]

Mr. Timms: Officials in my Engineering Inspectorate monitor power failures attributed to the national grid and they liaise with staff in the transmission companies to ensure adequate remedial measures are put in place. At my request, inspectors recently completed a formal investigation of the major interruptions on 28 August and 5 September 2003.

The investigation has highlighted a number of issues in connection with the power cuts. The inspectors' conclusions and recommendations are being passed to the electricity companies concerned, so that they can take the necessary action to enhance the robustness of their networks, and so make such occurrences less likely. The Engineering Inspectorate will be holding discussions with the companies concerned and monitoring the action they take. It has powers to ensure compliance with any recommendations made.

Home Computing Initiatives

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with representatives of the Swedish Government about home computing initiatives, with particular reference to the annual tax exemption on loaned computers announced by the Chancellor in 1999. [153341]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

I understand that Inland Revenue officials have had contact in the past with officials in the Swedish Ministry of Finance to obtain information about the benefits tax exemption that applies to computers in Sweden.

Information Technology

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money has been spent in each of the last five years on promoting internet use among micro and small businesses. [153572]

Mr. Timms: Through the Information Society Initiative and its successor the UK online for business programme, the Government has spent the following on promoting the use of the Internet and ICT:

	£ million
1999–2000	10.1
2000–01	13.9
2001–02	15.1
2002–03	13.1
2003–04	[1]7

[1] Forecast outturn.

Internet Shopping

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the Government's support for the Internet Shopping Is Safe campaign; and what assessment she has made of the campaign's contribution to consumer confidence in e-commerce. [152944]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government have been pleased to lend their support to the Interactive Media in Retail Group's (IMRG) Internet Shopping Is Safe Campaign on past occasions.

The Government welcome private sector initiatives to promote e-commerce. Business has an important role to play in spreading good practice and in raising consumer awareness about safe internet use.

My Department has made no assessment of the impact of the IMRG campaign on consumer confidence in e-commerce.

The Government are continuing their efforts to improve consumers' access to better information about online shopping through their Safe Internet Shopping initiative.

Labour Disputes

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the average cost of working days lost due to labour disputes in *(a)* the public sector and *(b)* the private sector for each year between 1995 and 2003; and if she will make a statement. [151712]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 29 January 2004]*: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary on 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 635–36W.

Manufacturing Advisory Service

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Manufacturing Advisory Service; and whether her Department will continue to fund this service in future years. [153433]

Jacqui Smith: I receive regular reports on the performance of the Manufacturing Advisory Service. These highlight the great success that the service has achieved as a source of practical advice and support to manufacturers in England and Wales since its launch in April 2002. More than 5,400 companies have benefited from initial diagnostic visits by the service's expert

advisers; of these, over 1,100 have gone on to undertake in-depth projects, resulting in productivity improvements averaging 38 per cent. and an annualised added value benefit approaching £38 million.

The Department's funding for the Manufacturing Advisory Service, which is at least matched by the English Regional Development Agencies and the Welsh Development Agency, will amount to £4.7 million in 2003–04 and £3.4 million in 2004–05. We are in the process of discussing with the Regional Development Agencies how the service will be funded in future years.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much imported nuclear waste has been dealt with by NIREX; what revenue NIREX has received for dealing with that waste; and if she will make a statement. [153373]

Mr. Timms: None. The UK does not allow the import of radioactive waste, and Nirex has no role in handling spent nuclear fuel from overseas.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the costs that will be incurred as a result of her plans for intermediate level waste substitution. [153560]

Mr. Timms: The costs associated with ILW substitution are dealt with in the Regulatory Impact Assessment at Appendix 2 of the Consultation document, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much additional nuclear waste she estimates will be stored in the United Kingdom as a result of her plans for intermediate level waste substitution. [153561]

Mr. Timms: The NAC International report estimates that the volume of overseas intermediate level radioactive waste (ILW) retained in the UK as a result of ILW substitution would be about 1.4 per cent. of the UK's total ILW. This amounts to approximately 3,000m^3. This would be partially offset by a reduction in high level waste that would otherwise be retained in the UK of about 50m^3.

Overseas Projects Fund

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the companies which have received support from the Overseas Projects Fund since 1997, stating in each instance *(a)* the amount received by each company and *(b)* the project for which the support was provided. [151515]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Overseas Projects Fund (OPF) Scheme closed to new applications on 7 July 2003. The scheme provides financial assistance towards the pre-contractual costs incurred by British companies when pursuing major overseas projects. It does not provide finance for the project involved. Since 1 January 1997, 100 companies have received OPF funding of £21 million in respect of 154 projects. Disclosure of individual OPF awards to companies could compromise their efforts to win overseas business. (Exemptions 13 and 14 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information apply—third party confidentiality and information given in confidence).

Printer Cartridge Remanufacturing Industry

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she has met representatives from the printer cartridge remanufacturing industry to discuss the scope of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [153196]

Mr. Timms: DTI Ministers have not received any requests for meetings with representatives of the printer cartridge remanufacturing industry.

Productivity

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of enterprise areas on *(a)* the overall productivity of UK businesses and *(b)* reducing disparities in regional productivity. [153575]

Jacqui Smith: Enterprise areas were announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 2002 pre-Budget report. A range of policy measures, some of which are currently still under development or subject to new legislation, will benefit enterprise areas. It is too early for an assessment of the contribution of these measures to economic regeneration or productivity to have been made.

Wind Turbines

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effects of low frequency noise from wind turbines on human health; and if she will make a statement. [153742]

Mr. Timms: Currently planning authorities take into account the recommendations and methodologies for the measurement of noise in the case of wind farms, as set out in the report "ETSU-R-97: The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms".

The methodologies applied during the planning application stage to satisfy authorities that noise emission levels will fall within accepted levels do not include the measurement of infrasound as we are not aware of any scientifically validated evidence that infrasound emitted from wind turbines affects human health.

Project Funding

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding has been provided by her Department to help finance *(a)* the Rethinking Construction Initiative, *(b)* the Sustainable Technologies Initiative, *(c)* the UK Online for Business Initiative, *(d)* the Waste and Resource Action Programme, *(e)* the Euroim II Initiative, *(f)* the Feasibility Studies Initiative for SMES, *(g)* the Local Partnership Fund and *(h)* the Technology Partnership Initiative in each financial year since the inception of each; what funding has been

allocated to finance each in future financial years; and if she will estimate the extent to which businesses have benefited from each initiative to date. [149447]

Ms Hewitt: The following table shows the level of funding provided to 2002–03 and the projected spend in future years.

Expenditure (£000)

	Rethinking Construction Initiative[a]	*Sustainable Technologies Initiative*	*UK Online for Business*[c]	*WRAP*[d]	*EUROIM II*	*Local Business Partnership Fund*[e]	*Technology Partnership Initiative*
1999–2000	n/a	132	—	—	—	—	350
2000–01	n/a	213	13,900	—	18	—	500
2001–02	1,494	312	15,100	650	49	23	500
2002–03	1,696	821	13,100	5,000	20	259	500
2003–04	1,723	1,170	7,000	5,000	65	314	450
2004–05	—	2,107	—	n/a	38	—	—
2005–06	—	1,554	—	—	—	—	—
2006–07	—	1,354	—	—	—	—	—
2007–08	—	[b]1,786	—	—	—	—	—
2008–09	—		—	—	—	—	—

Notes:
1. Funded by former DETR 1998 to June 2001. These data are not readily available.
2. Shows funding in years 2007–08 and 2008–09.
3. UK online for business was established in September 2000 as a successor programme to the Information Society Initiative.
4. Expenditure in 2000–01 includes the period April to August 2000, when the ISI was still in force.
5. Funding for 2004–05 will be announced shortly.
6. The Local Partnership Fund is not a DTI scheme. Expenditure figures have been provided for the Local Business Partnership Fund.
7. Some historic expenditure data have been omitted from this reply due to the disproportionate cost of providing it.
8. Forecast expenditure reflects outstanding legal commitments.

Benefits to business:

(a) Rethinking Construction Initiative

In the four years to 2003 projects involved in the demonstration projects programme (worth £7 billion) have achieved:

cost savings of 6 per cent. compared to the industry average, equating to £420 million;

a 61 per cent. lower accident rate than the industry average, projected as a £360 million cost saving; and

2 per cent. higher profits than the industry average, equating to £140 million.

(b) Sustainable Technologies Initiative

The Sustainable Technologies Initiative supports collaborative research and technological development to improve the sustainable economic growth of UK business.

(c) UK Online for Business

UK online for business programme has helped several hundred thousand businesses, with over 250,000 interactions per year. The programme has provided advice, publications, tools, case studies and research to help companies understand and adopt e-business.

A recent survey showed high levels of customer satisfaction: 89 per cent. of customers using the help desk facility said they would use the service again, and 87 per cent. using the call centre said they would use the service again. Satisfaction levels with UK online for business publications were also high at 86 per cent.

(d) Waste and Resources Action Programme

Numerous businesses have benefited from receiving advice and financial support from WRAP. Further details can be obtained from the WRAP Annual Report and Accounts, which are available at: www.wrap.org.uk

(e) Euroim II

EUROIM II helps businesses in the industrial minerals sector to find partners and prepare proposals for research and development support from EU programmes.

(f) Feasibility Studies Initiative for SMEs

This is not a specific DTI initiative, although feasibility studies are a key feature of the new Grant For Investigating An Innovative Idea.

(g) Local Partnership Fund

The Local Partnership Fund is not a DTI scheme.

DTI supports Local Business Partnerships through the Local Business Partnership Fund. This aims to develop a culture of education and dialogue with enforcers, and reduce the cost to business of implementing regulation by helping businesses to understand their responsibilities and making it easier for them to comply.

(h) Technology Partnership Initiative

The Technology Partnership Initiative promotes the UK environmental technology and services sector overseas and is a means of introducing UK companies to international markets.

Public Bodies (Membership)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the members of the *(a)* Northern Ireland Committee on Telecommunications, *(b)* Economic and Social Research Council, *(c)* Medical Research Council, *(d)* Natural Environment Research Council and *(e)* Horticulture Research International were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [151302]

Ms Hewitt: The information is as follows.

(a) The Northern Ireland Committee on Telecommunications ceased to exist on 31 December 2003.

(b) The Economic and Social Research Council consists of the following members:

Members	*Period of Appointments*
Alan Alexander	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006
Patricia Broadfoot	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004
Frances Cairncross[1]	1 April 2001 to 31 March 2004
Andrew Chesher	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004
Helen Dent	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006
Fiona Devine	31 January 2003 to 31 July 2005
Ian Diamond[2]	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2006
Hayden Ellis	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2004
Paul Johnson[3]	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2004
Jonathan Adair Turner	12 August 2003 to 31 July 2006
Robin Wensley	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004
Stephen Wilks	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004
Alan Wilson	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2004
Andrew Winckle	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006

[1] Chair.
[2] Chief Executive.
[3] This member is a Government official and does not receive remuneration from the Councils for this work.
Note:
Frances Cairncross has been reappointed for the period 1 April 2004 to 30 March 2007.
The Chair is paid £8,000 per annum and the members £6,000 per annum. The Chief Executive is not paid as a Council member and currently receives £81,800 per annum. He is also eligible for a bonus of up to 20 per cent. of salary.

(c) The Medical Research Council consists of the following members:

Members	*Period of Appointments*
David Armstrong	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006
Ernest Armstrong[1]	1 March 2001 to 28 February 2005
Colin Blakemore[2]	1 October 2003 to 30 September 2007
William Castell	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2005
Anthony Cleaver[3]	1 October 2002 to 30 September 2006
Kay Davies	1 October 2002 to 31 July 2005
Richard Denton	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2004
Peter Fellner	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2007
Derek Flint	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2006
Ruth Hall	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004
Ian MacLennan	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004
Richard North	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004
John Pattison[1]	1 September 1999 to 31 July 2004
Generva Richardson	1 March 2000 to 29 February 2004
Nancy Rothwell	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004
John Savill	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2005

[1] These members are Government officials and do not receive remuneration from the Councils for this work.
[2] Chief Executive.
[3] Chair.
Note:
The Chair is paid £8,000 per annum and the members £6,000 per annum. The Chief Executive is not paid as a Council member and currently receives £110,000 per annum. He is also eligible for a bonus of up to 20 per cent. of salary.

(d) The Natural Environment Research Council consists of the following members:

Members	*Period of Appointments*
Valerie Brown	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2005
Howard Dalton[1]	1 April 2002 to 31 March 2006
Trevor Davies	1 November 2001 to 31 July 2005
Michael Depledge	15 September 2003 to 31 July 2006
Lesley Glover	1 August 2001 to 31 July 2004
Colin Hicks[1]	4 December 2002 to 30 November 2006
Edwin Jenner	1 April 2002 to 31 March 2005
John Lawton[2]	1 October 2002 to 30 September 2005
Robert Margetts[3]	1 January 2004 to 31 December 2006
Karen Morgan	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2005
Sara Parkin	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006
Judith Petts	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006
David Read	1 August 2002 to 31 July 2005
David G. Roberts	1 August 2003 to 31 July 2006

[1] This member is a Government official and does not receive remuneration from the Councils for this work.
[2] Chief Executive.
[3] Chair.
Note:
The Chair is paid £8,000 per annum and the members £6,000 per annum. The Chief Executive is not paid as a Council member and currently receives £91,000 per annum. He is also eligible for a bonus of up to 20 per cent. of salary.

(e) Appointments to Horticulture Research International are made by Defra. Details are set out in Defra's response to parliamentary question number 150839.

Union Modernisation Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the planned budget is of the Union Modernisation Fund for each year between 2004 and 2009. [153550]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have not yet set the fund's budgets for individual years because our planning is at an early stage. I envisage that total spend from the fund will be of the order of £5 million to £10 million. I do not expect any expenditure from the fund before 2005–06 and I have not yet decided when it will close.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the Union Modernisation Fund will be *(a)* discretionary and *(b)* for helping workplace representatives to understand corporate accounts and corporate strategies; and if she will make a statement. [153551]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Our ideas to establish a fund are in their early stages. However, we plan to undertake a full public consultation on the draft rules of the fund in the autumn. When we have finalised the detailed rules of the fund after those consultations, we will be able to answer the particular questions you raise.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

"Schools for the Future"

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will announce his decisions on the next round of "Schools for the Future". [153131]

Mr. Miliband: We aim to announce successful projects in the first wave of Building Schools for the Future shortly. A written statement will be made to Parliament. Later this year, we expect to make announcements about subsequent waves of funding.

Behaviour Improvement Programme

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his answer of

8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 470W, to the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Luff), which local education authorities have received funds under the Behaviour Improvement Programme; and how much money they have received in each year since 1997 to enable them to tackle pupil behaviour. [148322]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 19 January 2004]*: The following tables provide information relating to local education authorities in the first and second phases of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP). As well as BIP funding, they provide details of other DfES funding allocated through Standards Fund grants that was most relevant to pupil behaviour and attendance as well as inclusion more generally. Details of expenditure on behaviour-specific measures are not collected centrally and cannot therefore be disaggregated.

The grants have been spent on a wide range of measures to support schools and pupils, including learning mentors, learning support units, education welfare officers, behaviour and education support teams, additional time for senior school staff to focus on behaviour and attendance issues, electronic registration systems for schools, enhanced pupil referral units and other forms of alternative provision for excluded pupils, additional services on school sites to increase community involvement and support for parents of disaffected pupils.

£

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000		2000–01		2001–02	
	Behaviour grants	Behaviour grants	School inclusion: pupil support grant	EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant	School inclusion: pupil support grant	EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant	School inclusion: pupil support grant	EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant
Phase 1 BIP LEAs								
Barking and Dagenham	53,100	64,450	181,537	—	324,154	448,000	424,200	768,000
Birmingham	51,120	208,564	1,431,850	2,660,963	2,745,445	8,511,400	3,297,300	10,474,400
Bolton	144,060	138,600	249,648	—	450,438	—	524,510	—
Bradford	117,600	126,765	370,910	1,212,970	1,038,324	3,846,000	1,259,400	4,688,000
Brent	156,900	155,000	—	—	149,399	580,000	550,700	994,000
Camden	72,600	97,300	274,044	345,033	338,762	1,102,900	449,850	1,316,900
City of Bristol	65,040	101,625	300,403	—	601,542	734,000	650,900	1,258,000
City of Nottingham	—	125,012	300,231	—	759,446	810,000	919,738	1,389,000
Enfield	285,240	175,280	299,300	—	441,845	—	582,050	893,000
Greenwich	84,000	117,250	341,588	543,479	600,907	1,791,000	739,550	2,210,000
Hackney	92,400	150,000	351,785	395,438	567,223	1,422,300	637,250	1,792,300
Hammersmith and Fulham	12,000	31,750	155,545	235,290	288,194	789,000	372,500	975,000
Haringey	205,560	144,885	249,459	456,762	553,976	1,609,800	740,500	2,023,800
Hounslow	39,960	38,000	102,463	—	375,727	—	455,450	674,000
Islington	189,600	130,500	305,285	368,499	473,002	1,315,600	579,700	1,646,600
Kensington and Chelsea	99,300	3,780	133,339	137,743	152,181	826,800	152,762	1,143,800
Knowsley	76,800	24,375	291,054	507,285	775,415	1,682,500	908,550	2,076,500
Lambeth	118,020	137,093	316,149	339,617	542,372	1,347,900	640,450	1,744,900
Leeds	256,320	302,250	473,013	1,363,727	1,087,851	4,434,200	1,335,350	5,440,200
Lewisham	114,900	121,440	280,279	527,111	583,335	1,752,800	685,400	2,166,800
Liverpool	209,280	178,000	398,101	1,344,798	1,494,998	4,211,800	1,797,800	5,122,800
Manchester	107,160	122,513	434,635	1,080,735	1,432,680	3,603,400	1,673,000	4,499,400
Newham	91,200	178,500	336,066	773,793	839,869	2,539,900	1,124,650	3,121,900
Oldham	—	—	205,517	—	469,200	—	573,500	815,000
Reading	—	—	69,636	—	146,801	—	152,700	—
Rochdale	127,680	135,000	193,750	—	502,491	626,000	589,700	1,073,000
Salford	44,880	48,452	198,530	478,338	580,082	1,615,700	641,623	2,002,700
Sheffield	—	102,172	255,330	1,009,575	926,995	3,235,800	1,007,900	3,973,800
Slough borough council	—	125,100	126,622	—	162,144	—	191,500	—
Southwark	87,840	67,389	427,031	544,656	802,783	1,870,400	974,000	2,342,400
Tower Hamlets	247,860	185,183	340,939	775,891	954,690	2,400,100	1,189,250	2,915,100
Waltham Forest	151,560	151,050	259,372	508,202	521,261	1,682,300	627,050	2,371,300
Westminster	47,100	45,000	207,372	315,512	328,063	640,900	370,000	640,900
Wolverhampton	215,880	209,677	279,733	—	455,057	—	565,550	714,000

£

	2002–03		2003–04		
	School inclusion: pupil support grant	EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant	Behaviour improvement programme	EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant	Behaviour improvement programme
Phase 1 BIP LEAs					
Barking and Dagenham	435,064	849,325	816,667	907,415	1,400,335
Birmingham	3,132,435	11,045,215	875,000	11,452,940	1,442,000
Bolton	534,475	—	875,000	—	1,442,000
Bradford	1,206,891	4,936,502	875,000	5,114,004	1,442,000
Brent	564,522	1,098,266	875,000	1,172,742	1,442,000
Camden	466,081	1,404,027	875,000	1,466,261	1,442,000
City of Bristol	671,287	1,374,994	816,667	1,458,560	1,400,335
City of Nottingham	936,896	1,509,621	816,667	1,595,780	1,400,335
Enfield	611,153	1,657,990	875,000	1,755,126	1,442,000
Greenwich	742,741	2,324,551	816,667	2,406,373	1,400,335
Hackney	628,813	1,868,779	816,667	1,923,407	1,400,335
Hammersmith and Fulham	384,403	1,035,888	875,000	1,079,380	1,442,000

£

	2002–03		2003–04		
	School inclusion: pupil support grant	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*	*Behaviour improvement programme*	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*	*Behaviour improvement programme*
Haringey	768,714	2,129,796	875,000	2,205,507	1,442,000
Hounslow	455,500	1,256,024	816,667	1,332,470	1,400,335
Islington	583,574	1,720,802	875,000	1,773,803	1,442,000
Kensington and Chelsea	315,861	1,173,608	816,667	1,194,900	1,400,335
Knowsley	894,445	2,175,852	875,000	2,246,817	1,442,000
Lambeth	644,551	1,811,866	816,667	1,859,699	1,400,335
Leeds	1,321,814	5,734,182	875,000	5,944,170	1,442,000
Lewisham	667,643	2,271,569	875,000	2,346,405	1,442,000
Liverpool	1,812,723	5,415,053	875,000	5,623,805	1,442,000
Manchester	1,724,048	4,722,977	875,000	4,882,674	1,442,000
Newham	1,098,115	3,290,486	875,000	3,410,904	1,442,000
Oldham	568,717	1,503,257	875,000	1,584,154	1,442,000
Reading	160,335	—	875,000	56,661	1,442,000
Rochdale	590,596	1,174,239	875,000	1,246,552	1,442,000
Salford	657,043	2,091,173	875,000	2,154,368	1,442,000
Sheffield	990,027	4,166,982	875,000	4,304,969	1,442,000
Slough borough council	193,933	—	875,000	—	1,442,000
Southwark	989,651	2,451,420	875,000	2,529,292	1,442,000
Tower Hamlets	1,224,114	3,088,501	816,667	3,212,359	1,400,335
Waltham Forest	648,442	2,174,202	875,000	2,246,275	1,442,000
Westminster	376,153	707,227	875,000	754,604	1,442,000
Wolverhampton	592,328	1,328,161	875,000	1,408,276	1,442,000

£

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*		*2000–01*		*2001–02*	
	Behaviour grants	*Behaviour grants*	*School inclusion: pupil support grant*	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*	*School inclusion: pupil support grant*	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*	*School inclusion: pupil support grant*	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*
Phase 2 BIP LEAs								
Barnsley	120,420	144,032	226,442	—	410,952	—	515,400	702,000
Blackburn and Darwen	—	43,375	259,554	—	491,733	—	531,120	526,000
Blackpool	—	99,950	143,058	—	295,408	—	329,400	376,000
Doncaster	70,980	60,265	254,912	—	538,892	—	632,150	904,000
Baling	118,140	—	155,241	—	489,099	631,000	638,800	1,082,000
Gateshead	18,300	21,700	93,588	—	369,175	524,000	460,930	898,000
Halton	—	60,727	110,380	—	303,634	408,000	337,250	699,000
Hartlepool	70,020	87,910	152,496	—	217,050	312,000	268,000	535,000
Hull	67,200	129,249	241,296	—	703,101	770,000	856,840	1,320,000
Leicester	—	125,000	327,835	—	560,257	798,000	654,350	1,368,000
Luton	—	—	171,747	—	428,344	—	478,691	646,000
Middlesbrough	34,440	78,550	208,821	—	427,000	528,000	518,199	906,000
Newcastle	106,800	149,250	182,288	—	559,043	746,000	702,650	1,279,000
North Tyneside	173,040	175,304	317,220	—	349,879	490,000	403,350	840,000
Redcar and Cleveland	59,100	165,750	233,484	—	312,014	512,000	395,300	877,000
Rotherham	—	46,350	113,477	589,083	444,873	1,844,600	548,550	2,233,600
Sandwell	—	106,250	308,205	—	550,000	—	735,650	991,000
Sefton	94,500	53,500	183,546	—	525,220	362,000	592,250	1,088,000
Solihull	16,800	—	42,405	—	240,646	68,110	278,150	272,440
South Tyneside	20,980	93,350	119,237	—	372,100	508,000	416,600	871,000
St. Helens	—	40,849	140,237	—	303,340	534,000	366,000	915,000
Stockton	63,000	—	122,544	—	355,503	557,000	428,600	955,000
Stoke	72,000	93,060	171,242	—	533,590	676,000	641,165	1,159,000
Sunderland	—	86,500	202,926	—	673,264	966,000	819,000	1,656,000
Wandsworth	205,800	118,130	231,103	385,498	417,970	1,311,100	457,450	1,615,100
Wirral	115,980	47,000	221,297	—	684,558	1,035,000	907,600	1,774,000

£

	2002–03		2003–04		
	School inclusion: pupil support grant	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*	*Behaviour improvement programme*	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*	*Behaviour improvement programme*
Phase 2 BIP LEAs					
Barnsley	511,429	1,288,961	—	1,354,647	1,400,000
Blackburn and Darwen	529,450	964,205	—	1,012,923	1,400,000
Blackpool	341,660	692,942	—	730,043	1,400,000
Doncaster	623,873	1,674,751	—	1,770,287	1,400,000
Ealing	659,070	1,204,856	—	1,292,611	1,400,000
Gateshead	462,240	979,835	—	1,038,289	1,400,000

£

	2002–03			2003–04	
	School inclusion: pupil support grant	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*	*Behaviour improvement programme*	*EIC—learning mentors and LSUs grant*	*Behaviour improvement programme*
Halton	331,430	758,690	—	801,326	1,400,000
Hartlepool	268,520	583,094	—	617,446	1,400,000
Hull	861,780	1,436,525	—	1,519,757	1,400,000
Leicester	687,184	1,489,018	—	1,575,459	1,400,000
Luton	500,618	1,190,790	—	1,253,496	1,400,000
Middlesbrough	534,536	977,844	—	1,029,161	1,400,000
Newcastle	722,975	1,409,663	—	1,502,993	1,400,000
North Tyneside	393,724	927,376	—	989,787	1,400,000
Redcar and Cleveland	375,535	946,362	—	995,906	1,400,000
Rotherham	553,997	2,351,711	—	2,436,076	1,400,000
Sandwell	731,915	1,824,926	—	1,922,015	1,400,000
Sefton	577,962	1,615,924	—	1,711,583	1,400,000
Solihull	292,058	355,985	—	639,353	1,400,000
South Tyneside	395,770	943,890	—	995,954	1,400,000
St. Helens	375,174	992,792	—	1,048,358	1,400,000
Stockton	420,955	1,037,292	—	1,096,071	1,400,000
Stoke	654,928	1,262,134	—	1,335,802	1,400,000
Sunderland	859,950	1,810,263	—	1,920,450	1,400,000
Wandsworth	461,599	1,689,983	—	1,743,470	1,400,000
Wirral	952,480	1,995,629	—	2,085,364	1,400,000

Notes:
1. The gaps in:
(a) the Behaviour Grants columns relate to new LEAs created by local government reorganisation and LEAs that were unsuccessful in their bids for these competitive grants;
(b) the School Inclusion: Pupil Support (SIPS) Grant columns reflects the fact that Brent did not accept its SIPS allocation in 1999–2000;
(c) the Excellence in Cities (EIC) columns reflects the fact that EIC grants were phased in over a number of years.
2. The SIPS Grant ended in 2002–03.
3. BIP phase 1 commenced September 2002. BIP phase 2 commenced in April 2003.

Condover Hall School

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on Condover Hall school. [149773]

Mr. Miliband: Further to my previous answers about Condover Hall and to answers given previously by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, the situation at the school is unchanged. Condover Hall is proposed for closure as from July this year. We understand RNIB is in discussion with Local Education Authorities placing children at the school about suitable alternative provision.

Correspondence

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Spelthorne, dated 9 December 2003, regarding the funding of nursery education at Knowle Park Infant School, Staines; and if he will make a statement. [154196]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My noble Friend the Baroness Ashton replied to the hon. Member's letter of 9 December on 6 January.

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will provide a substantive reply to the hon. Member for Spelthorne to his letter of 27 November 2003, departmental reference 2003/0068433PO. [154344]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary replied to the hon. Member's letter of 25 November on 12 January.

Criminal Justice Skills Council

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the plans for a criminal justice skills council include computer forensic and security skills; and if he will make a statement. [152990]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Proposals for a Justice Sector Skills Council (SSC) are due to be considered by the Sector Skills Development Agency's Licence Assessment Panel on 11 February. The proposed SSC covers:

Community Justice
Custodial Care
Police Forces—including Investigative Skills
Customs and Excise
Asset Recovery Agency
Court Service (E and W)
Crown Prosecution Service (E and W)
Crown Office and Procurator fiscal (Scotland)
Scottish Court Service
NI Court Service
Dept of Public Prosecutions
Judges and Magistrates

Computer Forensics—the use of software in the detection of crime, forms part of investigative skills covered by the Police Force area of the Justice SSC footprint. This is different from molecular or biological forensic analysis carried out in the laboratory which is covered by SEMTA, the SSC for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.

Employers in the security sector are still considering how best they might connect to the Skills for Business network.

Education Review (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received from *(a)* parents and *(b)* other involved parties about the secondary schools and sixth form review in Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement. [153401]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* The Department has received approximately 100 letters from parents and other interested parties about the review of school provision in Gloucestershire. The review, and any decision on how to proceed, are matters for local decision. The Secretary of State has no role in the process.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with representatives of grammar schools in Gloucestershire following the county's education review; and if he will make a statement. [153402]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* The Secretary of State has not met any representatives of grammar schools from Gloucestershire. The local authority's review and any reorganisation proposals which may follow will fall to be decided by the local School Organisation Committee, or the Adjudicator if the Committee cannot reach a unanimous decision. The Secretary of State has no role in that decision making process.

Faith Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what regulations govern the teaching of religious education in faith schools, with particular reference to the teaching of faiths other than that of the religious group sponsoring the school. [153252]

Mr. Miliband: The regulations governing religious education in faith schools are set out in Schedule 19, paragraphs 3–6 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1988.

In summary, this sets out that for voluntary controlled schools, the religious education offered is to be in accordance with the LEA's locally agreed syllabus. However, if parents so request, arrangements should be made for religious education to be provided for their children in accordance with any trust deed or the practice followed before the school became controlled.

For voluntary aided and special agreement schools, the religious education offered is to be determined by the governors in accordance with the trust deed or (where such provision is not made by a trust deed) in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination, or in line with practice before the school became a voluntary school. But provision in accordance with the LEA's locally agreed syllabus may be made where parents request it and their children cannot conveniently attend a school where that syllabus is in use, unless the LEA is satisfied that it would be unreasonable to make such provision.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary faith schools there are, broken down by denomination. [153271]

Mr. Miliband: The number of primary and secondary faith schools by denomination is as follows:

	Primary	*Secondary*
Church of England	4,513	207
Roman Catholic	1,718	356
Christian [1]	16	17
Jewish	27	6
Methodist	27	1
Muslim	4	0
Sikh	1	1
Seventh Day Adventist	0	1
Quaker	1	0
Greek Orthodox	1	0

[1] Non-denominational.

Further/Higher Education

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money in his Department's allocation for support for further and higher education is held in ring-fenced budgets for specific initiatives. [152658]

Alan Johnson: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Assumed funding for further education in 2003–04, excluding learner support funds, is £4.7 billion. This includes funding of £187 million for special initiatives to improve quality and delivery and £216 million earmarked for capital investment.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) allocates funds to higher education institutions. For the 2003–04 academic year, HEFCE are allocating total funds of around £5.5 billion, of which £451 million relates to 'special funding' which supports initiatives that are not funded through their recurrent funding methodology, such as the Arts and Humanities Research Board and the Higher Education Innovation Fund; and £364 million is for earmarked capital funding.

In November 2002 we announced the consolidation of a number of further and higher education funding streams into core funding. In further education we consolidated the funding of pay and staff qualification initiatives into core funding and in higher education we mainstreamed four ring fenced funds 'Golden Hellos', the Promising Researcher Fellowship Scheme, Additional Capital for leading research institutions and Knowledge Exchanges into larger funding allocations. We continue to monitor the number of special funding allocations to ensure that they are appropriately targeted and that demands on institutions are proportionate to the sums involved.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of his Department's budget for further and higher education is allocated to grants for higher and further education institutions. [152659]

Alan Johnson: Around 92 per cent. of assumed total spending by the Department on further education in England in 2003–04 goes to institutions, the remainder being spent on student support quality assurance and development in FE. Around 77 per cent. of the total

spending by the Department on higher education in England in 2003–04 goes to institutions, the remainder being spent on student support and other small programmes.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the organisations operating in the field of *(a)* further and *(b)* higher education, apart from individual higher education institutions, which receive funding from his Department. [152693]

Alan Johnson: In further education, the bodies apart from individual FE institutions receiving funding from the Department are:

Learning and Skills Council
Ofsted
Adult Learning Inspectorate
Learning and Skills Development Agency
National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE)
Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
Capita
Sector Skills Development Agency
Institute for Employment Studies
Confederation of British Industry
Centre for Enterprise
Association of Colleges
Cambridge Training and Development
London Language and Literacy Unit (LLLU)
Manchester LEA
Association of Learning Providers
Basic Skills Agency
Institute of Education, University of London
Thurrock Primary Care NHS Trust
Centre for British Teachers (CfBT)
TUC Learning Services
TOPSS England.

Mark Haysom, the Learning and Skills Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Gentleman with a list of all organisations, other than FE institutions, operating in the field of further education that receive funding from the council. A copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

In higher education, the bodies receiving funding from the Department or the Higher Education Funding Council for England are:

Higher Education Funding Council for England
Teacher Training Agency
Foundation Degree Forward
Sector Skills Development Agency
The Office of the Independent Adjudicator
Quality Assurance Agency
Arts and Humanities Research Board
Student Loans Company
SKILL (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities)
Sector Skills Development Agency
The British Council
UKCOSA (The Council for International Education)
The UK Socrates-Erasmus Council
The UK NARIC (National Academic Recognition and Information Centre)
The Better Regulation Review Group
E-Universities Worldwide
Joint Information Systems Committee
UK Education and Research Networking Association
HE Academy
Leadership Foundation
Educational Grants Advisory Service
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total income of each higher education institution was in England and Wales in each of the past three financial years; and how much of the total income came from student tuition fees in each case. [141137]

Alan Johnson: The available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Finance Records and is given in the table.

Tuition fees and total income for HE institutions in England and Wales. 1999/00 to 2001/02

			1999/2000 Of which:	
HE Institution	*Total income*	*HE course fees*[1]	*Credit bearing course*	*FE course fees*
Total England	10,464,649	2,190,748	196,709	35,981
Anglia Polytechnic University	77,625	23,765	2,524	103
Aston University	45,953	7,782	2,012	0
Bath Spa University College	18,000	3,631	0	0
The University of Bath	82,198	15,356	1,426	0
Birkbeck College	42,389	8,047	595	0
The University of Birmingham	244,937	41,479	3,828	0
Bishop Grosseteste College	4,604	873	63	0
Bolton Institute of Higher Education	28,504	6,726	152	88
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth[2]	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Bournemouth University	47,653	17,753	1,517	0
The University of Bradford	64,593	11,777	2,448	5,207
Bretton Hall	10,556	2,276	0	27
The University of Brighton	72,250	24,014	852	0
The University of Bristol	176,922	24,151	1,268	0
Brunel University	79,289	18,074	334	169
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College	39,678	10,665	127	39

Tuition fees and total income for HE institutions in England and Wales. 1999/00 to 2001/02

HE Institution	Total income	HE course fees[1]	1999/2000 Of which: Credit bearing course	FE course fees
The University of Cambridge	372,072	37,586	5,062	0
The Institute of Cancer Research[4]	3	3	3	3
Canterbury Christ Church University College	39,850	15,464	477	0
The University of Central England in Birmingham	86,595	27,387	672	143
The University of Central Lancashire	87,722	23,670	764	426
Central School of Speech and Drama	5,462	1,161	98	20
University of Gloucestershire	36,732	7,097	909	40
Chester College of HE	21,826	9,702	122	0
University College Chichester	15,655	3,582	321	0
City University	75,832	33,656	4,220	0
The College of Guidance Studies[5]	1,261	152	0	49
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama[2]	3	3	3	3
Coventry University	81,217	24,337	84	0
Cranfield University	106,690	12,967	33,098	0
Cumbria Institute of the Arts	4,957	712	19	0
Darlington College of Arts	2,818	516	0	0
De Montfort University	113,369	29,565	28	0
University of Derby	56,129	15,435	0	717
University of Durham	110,976	18,791	2,678	0
The University of East Anglia	82,758	19,993	1,505	0
The University of East London	60,816	16,642	214	50
Edge Hill College of Higher Education	26,817	8,118	0	0
The University of Essex	54,949	13,314	1,511	0
The University of Exeter	85,603	16,083	2,203	0
Falmouth College of Arts	7,516	2,007	0	111
University of Gloucestershire	3	3	3	3
Goldsmiths College	38,966	11,488	258	82
The University of Greenwich	97,092	23,385	0	0
Harper Adams University College	13,095	1,693	243	0
University of Hertfordshire	96,597	30,697	1,065	201
Homerton College	15,026	1,380	39	0
The University of Huddersfield	69,033	13,627	239	0
The University of Hull[6]	77,880	20,651	138	0
Imperial College of Science, Technology	338,972	33,338	1,665	0
Institute of Advanced Nursing Education	9,690	1,035	0	0
Institute of Education	33,010	4,636	1,832	0
The University of Keele	58,450	12,689	0	0
The University of Kent at Canterbury	68,726	15,134	106	764
Kent Institute of Art & Design	14,480	3,703	14	254
King Alfred's College, Winchester	18,209	3,367	831	0
King's College London	312,034	39,029	978	0
Kingston University	80,302	24,889	970	77
The University of Lancaster	84,013	14,103	0	0
Leeds Metropolitan University	87,397	20,960	1,549	366
The University of Leeds	258,747	45,978	3,759	0
The University of Leicester	122,942	25,223	205	0
The University of Lincoln	48,791	12,189	385	0
Liverpool Hope	27,702	4,103	5,342	0
Liverpool John Moores University	97,568	24,584	116	6
The University of Liverpool	179,127	28,657	670	0
London Business School	49,690	15,407	17,136	0
University of London	131,609	14,991	2,289	1,334
London Guildhall University	51,047	13,510	529	459
The London Institute	78,075	18,308	3,687	4,482
London South Bank University	87,757	29,363	1,816	37
London School of Economics and Politics	94,477	39,102	1,819	0
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	36,565	5,243	0	0
Loughborough University	106,725	16,925	1,413	134
University of Luton	51,275	18,169	457	-25
University of Manchester	297,776	50,043	9,895	0
The University of Manchester Institute c	92,695	17,736	571	1,612
The Manchester Metropolitan University	128,481	28,433	1,001	29
Middlesex University	105,079	36,320	0	0
The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	171,306	20,197	3,485	0
Newman College	6,068	1,090	6	0
The University of North London	59,187	12,017	2,565	0
North Riding College Higher Education	6,647	1,348	0	0
University College Northampton	39,530	10,702	927	88
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	1,195	141	0	13
The University of Northumbria at Newcastle upon Tyne	98,148	34,143	755	200

Tuition fees and total income for HE institutions in England and Wales. 1999/00 to 2001/02

HE Institution	1999/2000			
	Total income	HE course fees[1]	Of which: Credit bearing course	FE course fees
Norwich School of Art and Design	4,554	765	10	48
The Nottingham Trent University	110,757	25,317	2,233	0
The University of Nottingham	217,037	49,419	3,565	0
The Open University	274,045	101,023	897	0
Oxford Brookes University[6]	76,580	28,409	89	18
The University of Oxford	378,265	31,588	8,874	0
The University of Plymouth	99,889	23,200	841	0
The University of Portsmouth	83,384	23,469	1,179	97
Queen Mary and Westfield College	119,859	15,489	946	0
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication	5,747	1,398	0	53
The University of Reading	111,430	21,853	1,293	0
The College of Ripon and York St John[8]	20,274	5,362	608	0
University of Surrey, Roehampton	35,796	8,081	622	0
Rose Bruford College	5,832	1,251	0	0
Royal Academy of Music	8,970	2,788	0	413
Royal Agricultural College[2]	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Royal College of Art	17,533	3,281	198	0
Royal College of Music	9,727	2,106	639	0
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	56,313	11,728	243	307
Royal Northern College of Music	8,355	1,497	0	0
The Royal Veterinary College	23,335	2,498	83	0
St. George's Hospital Medical School	47,529	2,387	435	0
College of St. Mark and St. John	15,901	3,116	1,009	53
St. Martin's College	32,466	12,377	0	0
St. Mary's College	14,322	3,118	401	0
The University of Salford	110,044	30,526	533	43
The School of Oriental and African Studies	32,275	13,564	1,126	0
The School of Pharmacy	9,168	1,608	85	0
Sheffield Hallam University	107,956	28,964	750	172
The University of Sheffield	211,996	43,582	2,679	0
Southampton Institute	54,399	11,400	4,245	34
The University of Southampton	196,607	35,479	1,924	0
Staffordshire University	65,441	17,126	781	17
The University of Sunderland	67,935	12,238	92	47
The Surrey Institute of Art and Design,	14,799	3,477	10	190
The University of Surrey	109,837	27,319	1,811	0
The University of Sussex	81,085	15,686	329	0
The University of Teesside	55,375	18,712	212	0
Thames Valley University	55,666	22,427	1,692	483
Trinity And All Saints College	10,865	2,544	109	0
Trinity College of Music	4,732	1,294	0	0
University College London	382,422	42,561	8,980	0
The University of Warwick	165,295	22,240	712	15,852
University of the West of England, Bristol	104,287	21,968	1,193	0
Westminster College[7]	6,682	932	0	0
The University of Westminster	94,220	28,703	2,512	0
Wimbledon School of Art	4,861	853	0	156
The University of Wolverhampton	86,844	23,845	0	0
University College Worcester	19,785	7,980	371	0
Writtle College	11,827	1,344	0	696
Wye College	11,519	2,174	224	0
The University of York	96,873	16,650	2,288	0
Total Wales	598,207	118,302	4,373	98
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	58,855	9,291	330	0
University of Wales, Bangor	64,198	13,337	1,067	0
Cardiff University	143,853	28,471	2,439	0
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	39,461	7,537	0	39
University of Glamorgan	62,044	15,582	9	0
The University of Wales, Lampeter	9,789	1,877	27	0
University of Wales College of Medicine	61,612	12,906	0	0
University of Wales College, Newport	24,196	4,894	267	8
The North-East Wales Institute of High	17,888	4,006	0	0
University of Wales, Registry	6,187	112	0	0
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	4,414	898	168	0
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	15,882	3,188	15	10
University of Wales, Swansea	81,515	14,896	51	38
Trinity College, Carmarthen	8,313	1,307	0	3

	Total income	*HE course fees1*	*2000/01 Of which: Credit bearing course*	*FE course fees*
Total England	11,068,645	2,335,102	209,252	25,975
Anglia Polytechnic University	81,414	24,098	1,992	132
Aston University	49,632	8,768	2,022	0
Bath Spa University College	20,331	4,314	0	0
The University of Bath	88,845	17,194	1,767	82
Birkbeck College	40,174	8,854	520	0
The University of Birmingham	255,440	43,089	2,873	0
Bishop Grosseteste College	4,926	909	98	0
Bolton Institute of Higher Education	27,796	6,065	51	109
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth[2]	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Bournemouth University	51,861	20,217	655	0
The University of Bradford	66,745	12,506	1,971	5,711
Bretton Hall	15,732	2,508	36	0
The University of Brighton	77,784	25,774	1,031	0
The University of Bristol	191,770	25,999	1,567	0
Brunel University	83,650	20,173	233	170
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College	41,594	11,756	110	22
The University of Cambridge	396,519	38,628	8,980	0
The Institute of Cancer Research[4]	41,954	853	0	0
Canterbury Christ Church University College	45,193	16,201	171	0
The University of Central England in Birmingham	89,258	30,089	804	138
The University of Central Lancashire	92,566	26,465	959	431
Central School of Speech and Drama	5,759	1,152	134	15
University of Gloucestershire	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Chester College of HE	22,640	10,754	82	0
University College Chichester	17,136	3,685	353	0
City University	82,071	38,134	4,457	0
The College of Guidance Studies[5]	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama[2]	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Coventry University	84,320	27,165	5	0
Cranfield University	117,471	14,964	35,833	0
Cumbria Institute of the Arts	5,489	828	0	32
Darlington College of Arts	3,111	488	0	0
De Montfort University	118,386	31,439	55	0
University of Derby	55,468	15,668	20	784
University of Durham	118,589	20,449	1,758	0
The University of East Anglia	90,154	21,489	1,348	0
The University of East London	65,894	18,640	0	47
Edge Hill College of Higher Education	28,840	9,901	0	0
The University of Essex	63,944	15,327	1,807	0
The University of Exeter	88,877	16,542	1,966	0
Falmouth College of Arts	8,795	2,209	0	23
University of Gloucestershire	37,469	7,872	855	40
Goldsmiths College	43,857	12,514	291	112
The University of Greenwich	98,010	27,520	0	0
Harper Adams University College	13,747	1,746	220	0
University of Hertfordshire	100,845	32,041	922	225
Homerton College	16,193	1,519	0	0
The University of Huddersfield	73,671	14,061	490	0
The University of Hull[6]	91,267	23,651	209	0
Imperial College of Science, Technology	380,761	36,352	3,027	0
Institute of Advanced Nursing Education	8,391	397	0	0
Institute of Education	34,034	4,431	2,612	0
The University of Keele	61,652	13,548	220	0
The University of Kent at Canterbury	70,857	15,838	153	903
Kent Institute of Art & Design	14,494	3,434	67	357
King Alfred's College, Winchester	17,981	3,767	926	0
King's College London	301,544	40,944	2,573	0
Kingston University	83,133	25,886	1,256	54
The University of Lancaster	89,882	15,297	0	0
Leeds Metropolitan University	92,791	23,432	1,469	638
The University of Leeds	273,627	50,060	3,886	0
The University of Leicester	130,865	27,165	197	0
The University of Lincoln	52,935	12,652	43	0
Liverpool Hope	29,409	4,848	333	0
Liverpool John Moores University	99,273	25,365	171	0
The University of Liverpool	192,638	30,074	970	0
London Business School	55,674	18,278	18,683	0
University of London	92,128	1,884	1,411	0
London Guildhall University	52,441	14,407	1,087	900
The London Institute	83,474	19,868	4,156	5,361

	2000/01			
			Of which:	
	Total income	HE course fees1	Credit bearing course	FE course fees
London South Bank University	98,496	32,933	2,663	43
London School of Economics and Politics	98,219	39,013	2,099	0
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	41,042	5,187	0	0
Loughborough University	114,847	18,696	970	103
University of Luton	49,033	18,206	-7	12
University of Manchester	315,604	55,735	12,053	0
The University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology	104,089	18,714	439	1,601
The Manchester Metropolitan University	132,869	29,665	771	22
Middlesex University	113,668	41,390	0	0
The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	189,347	22,824	3,738	0
Newman College	6,388	1,224	0	0
The University of North London	64,355	14,569	2,581	0
North Riding College Higher Education	3	3	3	3
University College Northampton	41,057	11,334	1,089	116
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	1,387	143	0	11
The University of Northumbria at Newcastle upon Tyne	99,669	38,641	1,009	153
Norwich School of Art and Design	4,545	795	11	52
The Nottingham Trent University	114,164	26,534	0	2,495
The University of Nottingham	241,493	54,975	3,973	0
The Open University	289,977	100,471	1,362	0
Oxford Brookes University[6]	87,508	29,604	1,016	23
The University of Oxford	407,723	33,934	7,787	0
The University of Plymouth	102,748	25,640	545	52
The University of Portsmouth	85,178	24,185	1,073	104
Queen Mary and Westfield College	124,318	16,798	1,330	0
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication	6,386	1,673	0	50
The University of Reading	117,985	23,792	618	0
The College of Ripon and York St John[8]	20,951	5,744	771	0
University of Surrey, Roehampton	38,113	8,768	718	0
Rose Bruford College	4,170	1,179	36	0
Royal Academy of Music	10,743	2,946	0	441
Royal Agricultural College[2]	7,672	944	0	0
Royal College of Art	18,258	3,351	228	0
Royal College of Music	10,353	2,169	675	0
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	59,364	11,753	360	923
Royal Northern College of Music	8,884	1,571	0	0
The Royal Veterinary College	25,846	2,799	89	0
St. George's Hospital Medical School	50,351	2,547	451	0
College of St. Mark and St. John	14,697	3,166	629	49
St. Martin's College	33,863	13,053	0	0
St. Mary's College	14,420	3,013	395	0
The University of Salford	111,151	32,131	1,257	0
The School of Oriental and African Studies	32,908	13,949	1,241	0
The School of Pharmacy	9,478	1,798	48	0
Sheffield Hallam University	114,203	29,728	802	190
The University of Sheffield	224,599	46,068	3,094	0
Southampton Institute	54,570	10,781	4,108	386
The University of Southampton	214,351	38,044	1,286	34
Staffordshire University	71,043	17,982	1,036	1
The University of Sunderland	71,305	14,263	95	7
The Surrey Institute of Art and Design,	16,514	3,917	27	201
The University of Surrey	116,524	28,358	2,127	0
The University of Sussex	85,784	16,158	314	0
The University of Teesside	58,314	20,060	15	0
Thames Valley University	54,727	22,808	1,708	698
Trinity And All Saints College	11,429	2,608	166	0
Trinity College of Music	5,506	1,400	0	0
University College London	412,283	44,734	10,499	0
The University of Warwick	174,451	36,338	4,550	1106
University of the West of England, Bristol	107,431	22,227	879	24
Westminster College[7]	3	3	3	3
The University of Westminster	95,055	29,101	2,924	0
Wimbledon School of Art	5,188	1,075	0	0
The University of Wolverhampton	90,252	24,395	0	0
University College Worcester	19,060	6,560	639	0
Writtle College	13,701	1,439	0	792
Wye College	3	3	3	3
The University of York	103,539	17,941	3,080	0
Total Wales	641,060	125,657	4,715	90
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	62,665	9,372	409	0

	2000/01			
		Of which:		
	Total income	HE course fees1	Credit bearing course	FE course fees
University of Wales, Bangor	67,149	13,948	1,107	0
Cardiff University	156,819	30,299	2,646	0
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	44,175	9,306	0	34
University of Glamorgan	64,820	16,118	24	0
The University of Wales, Lampeter	9,715	1,708	7	0
University of Wales College of Medicine	68,058	13,745	0	0
University of Wales College, Newport	26,010	4,257	180	2
The North-East Wales Institute of High	18,771	4,045	0	0
University of Wales, Registry	6,601	0	0	0
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	6,412	972	188	0
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	17,528	3,508	126	10
University of Wales, Swansea	83,248	16,999	28	42
Trinity College, Carmarthen	9,063	1,380	0	2

	2001/02			
		Of which:		
	Total income	HE course fees[1]	Credit bearing course	FE course fees
Total England	11,839,076	2,561,139	219,264	24,887
Anglia Polytechnic University	89,496	25,690	1,930	51
Aston University	53,392	11,676	1,096	0
Bath Spa University College	21,217	4,602	0	0
The University of Bath	101,254	19,549	1,751	0
Birkbeck College	46,355	10,769	939	0
The University of Birmingham	279,521	48,540	3,135	0
Bishop Grosseteste College	5,395	1,069	73	0
Bolton Institute of Higher Education	26,984	6,516	31	98
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth[2]	8,173	1,329	98	316
Bournemouth University	57,443	22,262	887	0
The University of Bradford	72,211	14,336	1,745	6,742
Bretton Hall				
The University of Brighton	80,642	25,895	967	0
The University of Bristol	209,265	28,940	1,700	0
Brunel University	88,721	21,656	244	174
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College	41,792	11,903	294	25
The University of Cambridge	446,755	43,113	9,714	0
The Institute of Cancer Research[4]	46,656	942	0	0
Canterbury Christ Church University College	50,816	17,376	233	0
The University of Central England in Birmingham	94,558	34,455	2,409	172
The University of Central Lancashire	98,000	29,663	412	220
Central School of Speech and Drama	6,096	1,195	156	2
University of Gloucestershire	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
Chester College of HE	24,760	11,235	38	0
University College Chichester	17,694	3,518	328	0
City University	100,741	50,309	4,681	0
The College of Guidance Studies[5]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama[2]	3,578	557	0	0
Coventry University	92,184	29,125	17	222
Cranfield University	122,039	15,355	35,516	0
Cumbria Institute of the Arts	5,894	923	0	17
Darlington College of Arts	3,356	545	0	0
De Montfort University	113,714	30,064	30	0
University of Derby	62,121	15,978	16	704
University of Durham	129,219	21,196	2,070	0
The University of East Anglia	98,412	24,235	929	0
The University of East London	66,525	19,973	0	0
Edge Hill College of Higher Education	31,025	4,950	0	0
The University of Essex	68,451	17,188	1,842	0
The University of Exeter	96,202	17,979	1,979	0
Falmouth College of Arts	9,937	2,236	0	53
University of Gloucestershire	37,430	8,415	754	26
Goldsmiths College	44,340	13,375	257	84
The University of Greenwich	106,255	30,845	0	0
Harper Adams University College	15,393	1,746	239	0
University of Hertfordshire	105,660	34,086	1,187	281
Homerton College	5,369	0	0	0
The University of Huddersfield	76,131	13,793	1,715	0
The University of Hull[6]	94,481	26,154	0	0
Imperial College of Science, Technology	381,230	40,375	2,128	0
Institute of Advanced Nursing Education	9,625	601	0	0

	2001/02			
			Of which:	
	Total income	HE course fees[1]	Credit bearing course	FE course fees
Institute of Education	37,561	4,513	3,929	0
The University of Keele	64,615	14,105	317	0
The University of Kent at Canterbury	77,864	18,068	1,038	0
Kent Institute of Art & Design	14,834	3,440	98	257
King Alfred's College, Winchester	18,172	4,648	232	0
King's College London	318,815	46,063	2,196	0
Kingston University	90,716	29,220	1,383	47
The University of Lancaster	95,437	18,010	0	0
Leeds Metropolitan University	101,218	25,605	2,273	629
The University of Leeds	302,607	56,286	5,093	0
The University of Leicester	145,842	31,338	175	0
The University of Lincoln	59,230	10,065	5	112
Liverpool Hope	31,225	5,675	559	0
Liverpool John Moores University	103,618	26,205	48	0
The University of Liverpool	205,650	32,291	797	0
London Business School	61,918	23,667	19,938	0
University of London	97,634	1,856	1,734	0
London Guildhall University	54,539	15,810	837	154
The London Institute	91,692	22,979	4,865	5,699
London South Bank University	94,760	35,778	3,185	52
London School of Economics and Politics	104,344	45,362	2,607	0
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	50,210	5,518	0	0
Loughborough University	121,869	21,270	819	101
University of Luton	51,075	20,876	230	1
University of Manchester	328,574	58,593	12,020	0
The University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology	117,067	20,431	245	1,625
The Manchester Metropolitan University	139,644	32,366	801	31
Middlesex University	118,480	43,283	0	0
The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	212,929	26,086	3,680	0
Newman College	7,129	1,325	11	0
The University of North London	69,669	18,855	2,746	0
North Riding College Higher Education	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
University College Northampton	42,624	11,945	1,801	432
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	1,709	185	0	12
The University of Northumbria at Newcastle upon Tyne	109,034	40,258	1,190	223
Norwich School of Art and Design	4,734	852	11	60
The Nottingham Trent University	2,078	0	—	—
The University of Nottingham	265,302	61,588	3,217	0
The Open University	302,268	104,667	857	0
Oxford Brookes University[6]	90,704	32,058	1,076	23
The University of Oxford	426,549	37,619	7,878	0
The University of Plymouth	112,942	27,497	526	186
The University of Portsmouth	92,623	27,693	1,225	137
Queen Mary and Westfield College	139,604	20,720	1,387	0
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication	7,188	1,639	0	36
The University of Reading	23,703	2,012	0	
The College of Ripon and York St John[8]	21,783	6,540	545	0
University of Surrey, Roehampton	40,200	9,247	447	0
Rose Bruford College	4,227	1,126	30	0
Royal Academy of Music	11,720	3,126	0	476
Royal Agricultural College[2]	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Royal College of Art	19,339	3,680	235	0
Royal College of Music	11,537	2,045	717	0
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	63,189	14,206	347	1,037
Royal Northern College of Music	9,294	1,792	0	0
The Royal Veterinary College	27,954	3,037	95	0
St. George's Hospital Medical School	54,188	6,295	496	0
College of St. Mark and St. John	14,698	3,268	645	12
St. Martin's College	35,369	11,863	734	0
St. Mary's College	14,792	3,122	102	0
The University of Salford	115,154	37,694	292	57
The School of Oriental and African Studies	33,945	14,215	1,342	0
The School of Pharmacy	10,731	2,017	82	0
Sheffield Hallam University	119,810	32,866	862	239
The University of Sheffield	237,988	51,250	2,758	0
Southampton Institute	56,301	11,679	4,457	514
The University of Southampton	233,796	41,105	1,876	0
Staffordshire University	74,758	18,147	1,043	0
The University of Sunderland	73,325	15,047	1,517	9
The Surrey Institute of Art and Design,	18,123	4,058	100	269

		2001/02 Of which:	
	Total income	HE course fees[1]	Credit bearing course	FE course fees
The University of Surrey	131,453	31,987	2,311	0
The University of Sussex	94,626	17,562	499	0
The University of Teesside	63,351	21,884	21	0
Thames Valley University	60,991	24,838	2,077	684
Trinity And All Saints College	11,910	2,684	131	0
Trinity College of Music	6,561	1,488	433	0
University College London	431,510	48,877	10,202	0
The University of Warwick	191,479	44,885	1,738	1,804
University of the West of England, Bristol	114,428	22,715	888	19
Westminster College[7]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
The University of Westminster	102,825	32,859	2,531	0
Wimbledon School of Art	5,540	1,130	0	0
The University of Wolverhampton	96,658	26,281	0	0
University College Worcester	20,059	6,702	721	0
Writtle College	15,569	1,560	0	763
Wye College	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
The University of York	113,319	19,616	2,349	0
Total Wales	696,478	136,733	5,292	115
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	68,926	10,180	575	0
University of Wales, Bangor	75,235	15,004	1,179	0
Cardiff University	167,906	32,343	2,942	0
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	45,629	9,971	0	63
University of Glamorgan	70,459	17,519	29	0
The University of Wales, Lampeter	9,842	1,779	8	0
University of Wales College of Medicine	77,368	15,240	0	0
University of Wales College, Newport	27,785	4,738	196	2
The North-East Wales Institute of High	20,728	4,630	0	0
University of Wales, Registry	6,969	120	0	0
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	6,632	992	207	0
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	17,893	3,801	138	0
University of Wales, Swansea	91,580	18,943	18	48
Trinity College, Carmarthen	9,526	1,473	0	2

[1] HE course fees include home and EC domiciled students studying full-time and part-time at postgraduate and undergraduate level, plus overseas (non-EC) domiciled students. Covers all fee income, including the £1,125 for full-time undergraduate courses.
[2] New institution
[3] Blank cells indicate no Finance Return in 2001/02.
[4] New institution in 2000/01.
[5] The College of Guidance Studies merged with Canterbury Christ Church College in 2000/01.
[6] North Riding College merged with the University of Hull in 2000/01.
[7] Westminster College merged with Oxford Brookes University in 2000/01.
[8] The College of Ripon and York St John changed it's name to York St John College in the academic year 2000/01.
Note:
Zero cells indicate that the institution submitted a separate Finance Return
Source:
HESA Finance Record

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will list the departments which receive higher education research grant funding in *(a)* dance, *(b)* drama, *(c)* performing arts and *(d)* sports-related studies; [152626]

(2) if he will list the research ratings under the two most recent research assessment exercises of each higher education institution and department in the UK; [152627]

(3) how many higher education institutions will receive more than £1 million in research grant from Government in 2003–04; [152636]

(4) what his policy is on the provision of research funding to departments rated 4 after the next research assessment exercise; [152638]

(5) whether it is his policy that some universities should cease to carry out research. [152687]

Alan Johnson: The following—List A—lists the 23 higher education institutions (HEIs) which will receive recurrent research grant funding for dance, drama and performing arts in 2003/04. List B—lists the 27 HEIs which will receive funding for sports-related studies in 2003/04.

List A: Institutions receiving Quality-related funding for Dance, Drama and Performing Arts[1] Departments in 2003/04

Higher Education Institutions:

University of Warwick
University of Bristol
University of Reading
University of Manchester
University of Kent at Canterbury
Royal Holloway, University of London
Nottingham Trent University
University of Surrey
University of Hull

University of Exeter
University of East Anglia
University of Birmingham
Lancaster University
Goldsmiths College
University of Surrey, Roehamptom
University of Huddersfield
University College Worcester
University College Chichester
Middlesex University
Manchester Metropolitan University
De Montfort University
York St. John College
University College Northampton
King Alfred's College, Winchester
Dartington College of Arts
Bretton Hall
Bournemouth University

[1] In the last two Research Assessment Exercises, Dance, Drama and Performing Arts were classed as the same Unit of Assessment and attract research funding in the same way.

List B: Institutions receiving Quality-related funding in Sports-related Studies Departments in 2003/04
Higher Education Institutions:

University of Birmingham
Manchester Metropolitan University
Loughborough University
Liverpool John Moores University
University of Exeter
University of Sheffield
University of Bristol
University of Brighton
Sheffield Hallam University
De Montfort University
University of Wolverhampton
University of Leeds
University of Bath
University College Chichester
Staffordshire University
South Bank University
Leeds Metropolitan University
University of Surrey Roehampton
University of Sunderland
University of Luton
University of Gloucestershire
Canterbury Christ Church University College
Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College

Details of the research ratings awarded in the two most recent Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) are set out in the documents '2001 Research Assessment Exercise: The Outcome' and '1996 Research Assessment Exercise: The Outcome', published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Copies are available in the House of Commons Library.

72 HEIs will receive more than £1 million in research grant from the HEFCE in 2003–04.

The UK higher education funding bodies carried out a joint consultation last year on the review of research assessment undertaken by Sir Gareth Roberts. Following detailed consideration of the responses to the consultation exercise, an announcement on the way forward is expected from HEFCE and the other funding bodies shortly.

The Government are committed to supporting and encouraging the highest quality research within available resources to ensure that we continue to compete internationally. High quality research departments are located in a wide spread of institutions and it is not the Government's policy to prevent any departments or institutions from conducting research. Institutions, as independent, autonomous bodies, must consider their strengths and decide the best focus for their academic direction and institutional mission.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the remits are of *(a)* the Higher Education Funding Council for England and *(b)* the proposed Arts and Humanities Research Council in the future support of arts and humanities research. [152628]

Alan Johnson: The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) allocates Quality Related (QR) funding for research to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England selectively, having regard to assessments of research quality in all academic disciplines. This funding is paid to HEIs as part of a block grant. Within the dual support system, it is intended to support the physical infrastructure for research and the costs of permanent research staff time including time devoted to curiosity-driven research in line with the institution's mission and priorities. It therefore complements funding the institution receives in the form of grant from Research Councils.

The responsibilities of the Arts and Humanities Research Council will be to carry out, facilitate, encourage and support research and postgraduate training in the arts and humanities. Its responsibilities will parallel those of the existing Scientific Research Councils in supporting specific research projects and postgraduate programmes of work in higher education institutions and related bodies in all parts of the United Kingdom.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his policy that Government funding for increases in the number of students in higher education should be directed at the provision of foundation degree places rather than full honours degrees. [153067]

Alan Johnson: As set out in the White Paper "The Future of Higher Education" and the January 2003 grant letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) we are committed to the expansion of Foundation Degrees while recognising existing commitments to growth in honours degree provision.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on incentives provided to higher education institutions for collaboration between departments or institutions. [152637]

Alan Johnson: The principal mechanism for encouraging greater collaboration between higher education departments and institutions is the Strategic

Development Fund, operated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The fund supports various forms of collaboration including, for example, institutional mergers, strategic alliances and incentives for developing innovative research programmes.

Regional Development Agencies

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his policy that Regional Development Agencies should have a statutory involvement in the provision of *(a)* higher education and *(b)* higher education research. [152702]

Alan Johnson: Regional Development Agencies' statutory purposes are: to further economic development and regeneration of their area, to promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness in their area, to promote employment in their area, to enhance development and application of skills relevant to employment in their area, and to contribute to sustainable development in the UK.

The Future of Higher Education White Paper outlines the growing role that RDAs have in HE and other knowledge transfer programmes and in addition outlines the following proposals:

An enhanced role for the RDAs in matching supply and demand for higher education. RDAs already have a direct input into determining new higher education provision in their regions to ensure it meets regional priorities;

To involve RDAs further in the AimHigher campaign, to help address regional needs for access to higher education;

To encourage RDAs to play a proactive role in developing the work of the New Technology Institutes (NTIs), including through funding; and

To ask RDAs to take responsibility for galvanising the business community to work harder to make best use of the opportunities offered by higher education; and to play a particular role in helping small and medium-sized enterprises articulate their needs, and make links with higher education.

Our research policy treats research as a national priority, and therefore funds the best research wherever it exists. The Higher Education Funding Council for England distributes research funding to universities by a formula according to the quality and volume of their research as measured in periodic Research Assessment Exercises. There is no explicit regional element in the formula and to introduce one might weaken our ability to compete in the international marketplace.

The RDAs are instrumental as drivers for regional growth and development, often in partnership with higher education institutions within their respective regions. This can involve supporting the research base within their region. However, this is a matter for the RDAs themselves to decide.

Religious Symbols

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received from the general public concerning the proposed policy in France of banning all religious symbols in public schools. [153532]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has received no representations from members of the general public concerning the proposed policy in France of banning all religious symbols in schools.

School Absenteeism

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many half-days have been lost owing to unauthorised absence of pupils in *(a)* East Midlands and *(b)* West Derbyshire in each year since 1997 (i) in absolute terms and (ii) as a proportion of the total number of half-days. [150879]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information requested is shown in the following table.

	East Midlands		*West Derbyshire*	
Academic Year	*Number of half days lost due to authorised absences*	*Percentage of half days lost*	*Number of half days lost due to authorised absences*	*Percentage of half days lost*
1997–98	1,347,350	0.8	11,003	0.4
1998–99	1,343,440	0.8	14,437	0.4
1999–2000	1,291,409	0.7	12,210	0.4
2000–01	1,357,059	0.8	15,625	0.5
2001–02	1,419,100	0.8	15,849	0.5
2002–03	1,411,852	0.8	15,186	0.4

Notes:
1. Figures relate to maintained primary and secondary schools but exclude maintained special schools and CTCs.
2. Figures cover pupils that were absent between September and May for each year

Sex Education

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his policy is on giving a social and moral context to sex advice offered to under 16-year-olds. [153667]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Our policy on Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is clearly set out in our Guidance published in July 2000. Our Guidance clearly states that 'the objective of SRE is to help and support young people through their physical, emotional and moral development and prepare them for adult life. A successful programme firmly embedded in Personal, Social and Health Education, sets a strong social and moral context to help young people develop personal and social skills and understand the importance of attitudes and values such as the importance of family life.'

Staying-on Rates (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what contribution has been made by *(a)* further education colleges in the Nottingham area and *(b)* the Nottingham Learning and Skills Council to the improvement of staying-on rates at schools in Nottingham North since 1997. [152955]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: School sixth form provision is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It is for them to comment on the specific contribution of the FE sector and the local LSC to improving staying on rates at schools in Nottingham North since 1997. I have

asked their Chief Executive, Mark Haysom, to write to the hon. Gentleman with the information requested and place a copy of his reply in the Library.

Student Finance

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what calculations he made to reach the conclusion in the Regulatory Impact Assessment of the Higher Education Bill that the projected future cost of the student living cost loan subsidy will be 27 per cent. [152567]

Alan Johnson: The Regulatory Impact Assessment states that the future cost of maintenance loans is estimated at 29 per cent. of the value of loans advanced, which comprises the cost of loan write-offs and the interest subsidy. It was estimated using a simulation model of the distribution of future maintenance loan debt, graduate earnings and student loan repayments.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much total additional money he estimates will have to be advanced each year to students as student loans in order to meet the Government's recently announced increase to maximum loan levels. [152782]

Alan Johnson: We estimate that the additional amount of maintenance loan advanced as a result of the higher maximum loan rates will be around £160 million per annum in cash terms in 2006/07 terms.

As stated in the Regulatory Impact Assessment published on 8 January, the resource cost[1] of raising the maximum rate of maintenance loan to match the basic living costs expenditure of the mid-range student is estimated at £65 million in 2006/07 terms. This is the resource cost to the Government of both the additional amount of maintenance loan advanced (given above) and the resulting impact on the repayments of fee loans.

[1] Estimates of the resource cost of the loans represent the real economic cost to the Government of providing the loans and take into account the forecast loan repayments, the foregone interest and any loan write-offs.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether students who receive payments as a grant rather than a fee remission will be entitled to receive the maximum student loan under the Government's proposals. [152783]

Alan Johnson: Details of the proposed arrangements are set out in the Government's discussion paper "Moving toward a single combined grant for higher education". Copies of the paper were placed in the Library of the House on 19 January; it is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much grant part-time students will be entitled to under the terms of the Higher Education Bill. [152785]

Alan Johnson: The Higher Education Bill does not specify the levels of financial support available to part-time students. Levels are set out in the student support regulations which are made annually. In 2004–05 a new package of support is being introduced for part-time students. Students on low incomes will be able to get a grant of up to £575 for fees and a grant of up to £250 for course costs.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes the Government are making to *(a)* the minimum student loan level and *(b)* the levels of loan available to students at intermediate levels of family income between the maximum and minimum loan levels. [152786]

Alan Johnson: The proposed new means tested student loan figures are given below. The maximum student loan will be increased to meet the basic living costs expenditure of the mid-range student in the recent Student Income and Expenditure Survey.

£

Category of student	*Maximum loan in 2004/05*	*Maximum loan in 2006/07 (before increase) at 2.5 per cent. inflation per year*	*New maximum loan for 2006/07*
First and second year students			
Living away from home outside London (max.)	4,095	4,300	4,405
Living at home (max.)	3,240	3,405	3,415
Living away from home in London (max.)	5,050	5,305	6,170
Final year students			
Living away from home outside London (max.)	3,555	3,735	4,075
Living at home (max.)	2,830	2,975	3,085
Living away from home in London (max.)	4,380	4,600	5,620

The minimum means tested student loan for each category of student, as now, will be 75 per cent. of the maximum eg £3,305 for students living away from home outside London in 2006/07 instead of £3,070 in 2004/05. The loan reduces from £4,405 to £3,305 as parental or spouse income rises from about £33,500 to about £44,000. The minimum loan is available to every eligible student regardless of family income.

Where under our proposals low income students receive the maximum combined grant of £2,700, which is in addition to their continuing entitlement to loans, we currently expect them to have access to loans worth the maximum entitlement to loan as in the table less £850. Details of the proposed arrangements are set out in the Government's discussion paper "Moving toward a single combined grant for higher education".

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the change in the length of time that students will take to repay an average loan following the increase in the repayment threshold from £10,000 to £15,000. [152787]

Alan Johnson: The estimate of the length of time to repay is the average across all students who take out a loan. This is different from the length of time it will take for some notional average graduate to repay. The estimate is from a model which simulates student loan repayments, based on assumed distributions of: length of time in Higher Education; size of means-tested loan taken out; size of fee loan, net of any fee remission; and borrower lifetime earnings. Some borrowers will repay more quickly than this estimated average and some less so.

As part of a package of reforms announced with the introduction of the Higher Education Bill, any debt outstanding after 25 years would be written-off. The threshold would increase to £15,000 in April 2005 and be increased with inflation from April 2010 onwards. The average time to repay would be around 13 years. Under the same approach to uprating the threshold, the average time to repay would be around 11 years with a £10,000 threshold.

The answer above is based on modelling on the basis of a separate fee grant and HE grant. Once the grants are combined, as announced by the Secretary of State to the House on 27 January 2004, the balance between maintenance loan and fee loan will be slightly different, though the impact on the overall time to repay is likely to be small.

Student Living Costs

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition he uses of what constitutes basic living costs for the average student. [153400]

Alan Johnson: We have based the increased rates of maintenance loan on the expenditure on basic living items for the average student in each loan category, as shown in the 2002/03 Student Income and Expenditure Survey (SIES). Students studying in London who live independently will benefit the most.

SIES showed that there is huge variability in students' level of expenditure. We have derived the following standardised list of basic living items based upon a list compiled by a departmental advisory group charged with overseeing the guidance for Higher Education Institution staff when considering applications for hardship support[1]. This definition is more generous than the definition of 'essential' expenditure that was used in the 1995/06 and 1998/09 SIES.

[1] The Advisory Group on Student Discretionary Funds (AGSDF)

Definition of basic living items

Broad basic expenditure groups	*Detailed items*
Accommodation	Rent/mortgage payments; council tax; utility bills.
Household	Food; non-alcoholic drink; household items; TV licence; land-line telephone bills; furniture; household appliances over £50; washing machine; fridge; contents insurance.
Travel	To university; to parental home; field trips
Course costs	Allowance of £260 per year (includes books; equipment; amenity fees; photocopying; stationery).
Personal	Clothes; footwear; glasses/contact lenses; medical treatment; personal items; entertainment spending allowance of £300 per year.

We recognise that on top of basic living items most students will want to buy goods and services that other young people want. The SIES shows that they manage this through supplementing student loans (where taken out) with a mixture of parental support, paid work and additional borrowing.

Undergraduates

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate students in Wales have declared themselves bankrupt in each year since 1992; and if he will make a statement. [153716]

Alan Johnson: The following table shows the number of student loan borrowers, both graduates and undergraduates, who have had bankruptcy orders made against them since 1992.

There are no figures showing undergraduates as a separate group.

Bankrupt year[1]	*Number of borrowers*[2,3,4,5]
1992	0
1993	1
1994	2
1995	4
1996	6
1997	7
1998	2
1999	6
2000	16
2001	22
2002	21
2003	[6]48
Total	135

[1] Calendar year in which the borrower became bankrupt.

[2] Data shows the number of student loan borrowers.

[3] Includes borrowers who may or may not have graduated from their course.

[4] Includes all types of students (including PGCE—Postgraduate Certificate of Education students).

[5] Data covers both types of student loan—Mortgage Style (including loans sold to the private sector) and Income Contingent.

[6] The increase in the numbers of bankruptcies in 2003 seems to be as a result of greater public awareness that students loans are provable in bankruptcy.

Source:

Student Loans Company.

Student Funding

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Government is required to provide identical funding to UK students and students from other EU countries choosing to study in the UK under all circumstances. [153065]

Alan Johnson: The Government are required, under Article 12 of the EC Treaty, to provide tuition fee support for EU nationals in a way that does not discriminate compared to UK nationals. This requirement does not extend to providing access to student loans or grants for maintenance purposes for EU students.

Student Incentives

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the £30 million budget set aside for further education student incentives. [153068]

Alan Johnson: As announced in the White Paper "21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential" in July 2003, we are currently piloting an Adult Learning Grant (ALG) in 10 local Learning and Skills Council areas. We are trialling the approach and will evaluate the impact of the pilots to establish, in the light of the conclusions of the next spending review, the best operational design for ALGs, with the intention of implementing a national roll-out of ALGs.

No announcement has been made on the budget for 2004/05 for the ALG pilots.

University Access

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the access regulator will hold responsibility for the allocation formula for the widening participation budget. [152778]

Alan Johnson: No. Responsibility for the widening participation and retention allocation will remain with the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The Director for Fair Access will be a regulatory, not funding body.

HEALTH

Acute Hospital Trusts

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who is responsible for meeting the costs where the activity of an acute hospitals trust exceeds the amount commissioned by primary care trusts without the agreement of those primary care trusts. [152310]

Mr. Hutton: Discussions about commissioning arrangements are undertaken locally between national health service trusts and primary care trusts and if required the relevant strategic health authority. However, NHS trusts are responsible for balancing their income and expenditure in year.

Adolescent Medicine

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialists in adolescent medicine there are in England. [152738]

Mr. Hutton: There is not a specific specialty called adolescent medicine. There are a number of specialties that specialise in the treatment of pre-adult conditions.

The table shows the number of consultants, employed in the National Health Service in England, in child and adolescent psychiatry, paediatric dentistry, paediatric surgery and within the paediatric group.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health services (HCHS): Medical and dental consultants within specialties that work with children

England at 30 June 2003	*Numbers (headcount)*
Child and adolescent psychiatry	500
Paediatric dentistry	26
Paediatric surgery	105
Paediatric cardiology	63
Paediatrics	1,700
Paediatric neurology	38

Source:

Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

Allergies

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much NHS funding is provided for the diagnosis and treatment of allergies; what plans he has to increase this amount; and if he will make a statement; [153364]

(2) what special NHS treatment centres are available for people with allergies in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gloucestershire. [153365]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on national health service funding for the diagnosis and treatment of allergies is not collected centrally. Health authorities (HAs) and primary care trusts receive unified allocations to cover the costs of hospital and community health services, discretionary funding for general practice staff, premises and computers and primary care prescribing.

The level of funding made available for the drugs, staffing and other costs of providing allergy services are determined locally. It is for HAs, in partnership with other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to provide health services for their populations including those with allergies.

The British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology handbook, "National NHS Allergy Clinics" (2001), lists 86 NHS consultant-led clinics in the United Kingdom. There were an additional 15 clinics run by NHS consultants identified by the British Allergy Foundation in the handbook.

Ashford Hospital

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress in the negotiations with Mercury Healthcare for the setting up of a new treatment centre at Ashford Hospital, Middlesex. [153276]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The Department, working with local national health service sponsors, is continuing to make good progress towards finalising a contract for the provision of an independent sector treatment centre at Ashford.

Asthma (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* girls and *(b)* boys aged between five and 15 years suffered from asthma in 2003. [152563]

Dr. Ladyman: The data available are shown in the table.

Finished admission episodes by sex for asthma in children
For children aged five to 15 years
NHS hospital trusts in England, 2002–03

Female	4,383
Male	7,011
Total	11,394

Notes:

1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

3. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2001–02 and 2002–03, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Audiology

Mr. Borstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many audiologist posts are *(a)* unfilled and *(b)* filled by temporary appointees in NHS audiology

departments in England; and what percentage of the total number of audiologist posts each of these figures represents. [152730]

Mr. Hutton: Information is not collected separately on vacancies for audiologists; they are included within the physiological measurement area of work. Information is collected in the national health service vacancy survey on the number of vacancies lasting three months or more. As at March 2003, 66, or 1.9 per cent. of physiological measurement posts were vacant for three months or more, a fall from 2.1 per cent. in the previous year.

Information on the number of posts currently filled by temporary appointees is not collected centrally.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people worked in the audiology department of Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton, in each of the last six years. [154183]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* analogue and *(b)* digital hearing aids were fitted in (i) Taunton Deane Primary Care Trust area and (ii) Somerset Coast Primary Care Trust area in each month of 2003. [154184]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hearing aid assessments were carried out in each month of 2003 in the *(a)* Taunton Deane and *(b)* Somerset Coast Primary Care Trust area. [154185]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not centrally held.

Chiropody

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many patients recorded as first contacts for chiropody services *(a)* had a foot condition that was cured within the year and *(b)* did not go on to receive foot care in the last year for which statistics are available; [153800]

(2) how many chiropody patients were cured within a year of first being referred in the last year for which statistics are available. [153802]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 9 February 2004]*: The information requested is not available centrally.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance is given to primary care trusts when considering the provision of chiropody services; and how compliance with such guidance is monitored. [153801]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 9 February 2004]*: It is for primary care trusts in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what responses the Government have received to its consultation on the abolition of the KT23 chiropody statistics; and when a decision will be announced. [153838]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 2 February 2004]*: The internal review of the KT23 chiropody statistics is not yet complete and formal consultation with interested parties has not commenced.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what measures are in place to ensure that all initial contacts for chiropody services receive foot treatment and are cured; [154328]

(2) how many patients recorded as initial contacts for chiropody services did not go on to receive foot care in each of the last six years for which figures are available; [154329]

(3) how many patients recorded as initial contacts for chiropody services had a condition that was cured within the year in each of the last six years for which figures are available. [154330]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available centrally.

Consultants

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about the number of consultants wishing to retire before August; and if he will make a statement. [152818]

Mr. Hutton: The NHS Pension Agency has not received any representations regarding the number of consultants who wish to retire before August.

The Department has published guidance, Reviewing your retirement options: 'Consultants and senior hospital doctors', which offers doctors approaching retirement the option to reduce the pace and commitment of work. The flexible careers scheme which is supported by central funding enables doctors, approaching retirement or who have already retired, to continue working flexibly and at the same time either supplement or enhance their pension entitlements.

Delayed Discharges

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of delayed discharge patients had been waiting over 28 days for a transfer of care as at 1 January in each year since 1997 broken down by local authority in England; [153424]

(2) how many delayed discharge patients were awaiting a domiciliary care package in *(a)* England and *(b)* each local authority as at (i) 1 January 2004 and (ii) 1 January 2003. [153425]

Dr. Ladyman: These data are not available centrally. All available information on delayed transfers of care since 1997 is available in the Library. The latest figures for 2003–04, Quarter 3 (December 2003), will be available by the middle of February and will be placed in the Library.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been paid by each local authority in fines for delayed discharge. [153813]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to the response given to the hon. Member for West Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) on 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1064W.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of adverse incidents occurring in *(a)* NHS and *(b)* non-NHS dentistry in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [152827]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of adverse incidents involving dental appliances occurring in National Health Service and non-NHS dentistry is shown in the table.

Incidents involving dental devices—1997 to February 2004

Year	NHS	Non-NHS
1997	15	8
1998	27	11
1999	28	9
2000	92	22
2001	61	28
2002	51	31
2003	25	32
2004	4	6
Total	303	147

The Government has established the National Patient Safety Agency to improve the safety of NHS patient care by promoting an open and fair culture and by introducing a new national reporting and learning system for patient safety incidents. The reporting system is being implemented across the NHS during 2004.

Domestic Violence

Mr. Woodward: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts in *(a)* Merseyside, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* England have a permanent domestic violence health professional responsible for implementing the Department's document Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual for Health Care Professionals. [153223]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not available centrally.

Drugs/Alcohol (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children aged between 14 and 19 years are known to have experimented with *(a)* drugs and *(b)* alcohol in 2003. [152554]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Data are not available in the form requested; however the latest available data are shown in the tables.

Table 1: Whether young people aged 14 and 15 have taken drugs in the last month, last year and ever, by gender—England, 2002

Percentage

	14 years	15 years
Boys		
Taken in last month	19	25
Taken in last year, including in last month	28	38
Ever taken	37	47
Girls		
Taken in last month	15	18
Taken in last year, including in last month	24	33
Ever taken	31	42
All pupils		
Taken in last month	17	22
Taken in last year, including in last month	26	36
Ever taken	34	45

Source:
National Centre for Social Research/NFER Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2002

Table 2: Whether young people aged 16 to 19 have taken drugs in the last month, last year and ever, by gender—England and Wales, 2002–03

Percentage

	Males	Females	All persons
Taken in last month	19	15	17
Taken in last year, including in last month	30	24	27
Ever taken	44	36	40

Source:
Home Office 2002–03 British Crime Survey

Table 3: Whether young people aged 14 and 15 have ever had an alcoholic drink and whether they had drunk alcohol in the last week, by gender—England, 2002

Percentage

	14 years	15 years
Boys		
Drank in last week	34	49
Ever drank	79	86
Girls		
Drank in last week	34	45
Ever drank	81	88
All pupils		
Drank in last week	34	47
Ever drank	80	87

Source:
National Centre for Social Research/NFER Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2002

Table 4: Whether young people aged 16 to 19 ever drink alcohol and whether they had drunk alcohol in the last week, by gender England, 2001

Percentage

Males	
Non-drinker	16
Drinks alcohol nowadays	84
Drank in the last week	59
Females	
Non-drinker	17
Drinks alcohol nowadays	83
Drank in the last week	57
All persons	
Non-drinker	17
Drinks alcohol nowadays	83
Drank in the last week	58

Notes:
1. Respondents are categorised as a 'drinker' if they report ever drinking alcohol nowadays.
2. Figures for non-drinker include those that used to drink alcohol but do not drink nowadays.
Source:
ONS Living in Britain. General Household Survey, 2001

Eczema (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of children who suffered from asthma also suffered from eczema in 2003. [152559]

Dr. Ladyman: Using latest data available (1996) the percentage of children who have suffered from asthma was 19 per cent., and those who have suffered from eczema was 23 per cent. The percentage of children who have suffered from both asthma and eczema was seven per cent.. This means that 37 per cent., of those with asthma have also suffered from eczema.

Ethical Recruitment

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the recruitment agencies used by the NHS have not signed up to the code of practice on ethical recruitment. [150658]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: The Department does not hold a list of agencies used by the national health service when recruiting overseas. NHS trusts should use only those commercial agencies which comply with the code of practice and which are listed on the Department's website.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* steps his Department is taking and *(b)* guarantees his Department seeks to ensure that the NHS does not employ recruitment agencies that have not signed up to its code of practice on ethical recruitment. [150659]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: National health service trusts should use only those commercial agencies which comply with the code of practice and which are listed on the Department's website.

Strategic health authorities are working with trusts to ensure they comply with the code of practice and only work with agencies which are compliant.

European Health Insurance Card

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made concerning the European Health Insurance Card; when he expects to issue such cards to UK citizens; and whether there will be a charge. [151491]

Mr. Hutton: Ministers are currently considering the options available for implementing the European Health Insurance Card in the United Kingdom. Member states, like the UK, which do not currently have a card-issuing infrastructure, have until 31 December 2005 to begin issuing cards to their residents. No decisions have yet been taken on the precise timetable for issue to UK residents. The card will be issued free of charge to the holder.

Foundation Hospitals

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 602–03W, on foundation hospitals, whether the Department will set minimum standards on *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental investments. [149506]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are no current plans to publish minimum standards on ethical and environmental investments.

Free Personal Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his estimates of the cost of implementing the Royal Commission recommendation of free personal care took into account the *(a)* decision of the Health Service Ombudsman in the case of Mr. Malcolm Pointon and *(b)* subsequent review by strategic health authorities of continuing care decisions and policies following the decision by the Health Service Ombudsman. [152913]

Dr. Ladyman: The decision by the Health Service Ombudsman in the case of Malcolm Pointon is a decision on an individual case, and as such has no bearing on the estimates of the cost of free personal care at a national level.

The review by strategic health authorities (SHAs) of past decisions on national health service-funded continuing care is retrospective. Payments will be made to individuals where incorrect decisions about NHS funding were made in the past, but these have no bearing on the future cost of free personal care at a national level. Any change made by SHAs to eligibility criteria for fully funded NHS continuing care, following review, is covered in the range of estimates given for the cost of free personal care.

GP Premises

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from general practitioners and their representatives on difficulties in purchasing appropriate premises because of *(a)* house prices and *(b)* negative equity; and if he will make a statement. [152128]

Mr. Hutton: I am not aware of any general concerns being raised by general practitioners or their representatives on difficulties in purchasing appropriate premises. The arrangements in place to reimburse GP premises costs take account of differing local property prices. Additionally, a flexibility was introduced in September 2003 to enable primary care trusts to provide a grant towards mortgage deficit and/or redemption costs to enable a move to new premises or to modernise existing premises to improve service delivery.

Head Injuries (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children suffered from severe head injuries in each year since 2000. [152561]

Dr. Ladyman: The data available are shown in the table.

Primary Diagnosis (ICD-10 SOO-S09) Injuries to the Head
Count of Finished Admissions Episodes
Age on Admission 0 to 17 years
NHS Hospitals England 2000–01 to 2002–03

	Admission Episodes
2000–01	40,408
2001–02	39,693
2002–03	38,170

Notes:
1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital.Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
3. Figures for 2000–01 are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data. For 2001–02 and 2002–03, figures are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Health Authorities

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the trust temporary borrowing limits for each strategic health authority are for 2003–04; [152472]

(2) what financial information requests are made by his Department of *(a)* strategic health trusts, *(b)* NHS trusts and *(c)* primary care trusts. [152720]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Health Care Assistants

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department will publish proposals on the regulation of health care assistants. [152828]

Mr. Hutton: The Government are committed to consult on proposals to regulate health care support staff, which will include health care assistants, and this consultation will be taking place in the near future. The consultation will identify those categories of staff whose clinical practice needs to be of a high standard in order to ensure patient safety. The proposals include a range of options including full statutory regulation for these staff and the Government will decide on the way forward in light of the responses to the consultation.

Independent Treatment Centres

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures the Government have in place to ensure that independent treatment centres run by NTC do not recruit from the NHS. [152927]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 5 February 2004]*: New treatment centres run by the independent sector will be precluded as part of the contracts they sign from poaching national health service staff. Providers are required to demonstrate to sponsors that their workforce strategy is compliant with the contract.

Mental Health

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many secure beds are available in each mental health trust; [152918]

(2) what the occupancy rates of beds in secure mental health institutions were in each mental health trust area in England in each of the last three years. [152942]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the form requested.

Information on numbers and occupancy rates of national health service beds, including those for people with mental health problems categorised by ward classification, is available from the Department's website at www.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he *(a)* has made and *(b)* will undertake of the support needs of families of sufferers of mental ill health. [152919]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national service framework (NSF) for mental health provides rationale and evidence base for a national standard for mental health services relating to carers of people with mental health problems.

This NSF standard stipulates that all individuals who provide regular and substantial care for a person on the care programme approach should have an assessment of their caring, physical and mental health needs repeated on at least an annual basis. People who provide regular and substantial care for a person on the care programme approach are also entitled to have their own written care plan which is given to them and implemented in discussion with them.

In view of the vital role carers play in looking after the users of mental health services, the NHS Plan set a target for services to recruit 700 carer support workers by the end of the year to increase the breaks available for carers, and to strengthen carer support networks.

In addition, the Department published "Developing services for carers and families of people with mental illness" in November 2002. Its recommendations are being taken forward by the National Institute for Mental Health in England.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many adolescent mental health specialists there are in England. [152718]

Mr. Hutton: As at 30 June 2003, there were 500 consultants in the specialty of child and adolescent psychiatry working in the National Health Service in England.

Consultant numbers in the specialty have increased by 12 per cent., 55 since September 1997.

Missed Hospital Appointments

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will introduce fines for patients who miss hospital appointments; and if he will make a statement. [153630]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 9 February 2004]*: We have currently no plans to introduce fines for people who do not attend (DNA).

The Government established a national booking programme as part of their modernisation agenda. Giving patients the opportunity to choose the location, time and date of their hospital appointment will reduce the number of DNAs.

NHS Staff

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many whole time equivalent *(a)* managers, *(b)* senior managers and *(c)* clerical and administrative staff were working in the NHS in England on 1 December, using the definitions in Table 6A of the Department's report, NHS hospital and community health services non-medical staff in England: 1991–2001. [145728]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 5 January 2004]:* The information requested as at 30 September 2002, the latest available data, is shown in the table.

NHS Hospital and Community Health Services: Administration and Estates staff in England as at 30 September 2002

	Whole-time equivalent
Total Administration and Estates staff	201,777
Senior manager	11,420
Manager	19,494
Clerical and administrative	158,978
Maintenance and works	11,831
Unclassified	54

Notes:
Figures are rounded to the nearest whole-number
Source:
Department of Health Non-medical Workforce Census

The definitions of administrative staff were changed for the 2002 non-medical workforce census to more accurately reflect their roles in the National Health Service. Until the September 2002 bulletin, table 6a showed a breakdown of the whole administrative and estates group, including staff working in direct support to clinical staff. It now shows those staff working in central functions and hotel, property and estates as well as managers, clerical and administrative staff working in central functions. Staff such as medical secretaries have been more appropriately classified as working in direct support to clinical staff. The more appropriate table 6a for September 2002 is shown in the following table. Hotel, property and estates staff includes laundry, catering and domestic services staff; essential for the day-to-day running of hospitals.

NHS Hospital and Community Health Services: NHS infrastructure support in England as at 30 September 2002

	Whole-time equivalents
NHS infrastructure support	158,026
Central functions—administrative and clerical staff	72,730
Hotel, property and estates	54,382
Manager	19,494
Senior Manager	11,420

Notes:
Figures are rounded to the nearest whole-number
Source:
Department of Health Non-medical Workforce Census

Patient Power Project

Mr. Portillo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds have installed services for telephone, television and radio under the Patient Power Project, broken down by the licence holder providing the service. [152033]

Mr. Hutton: 52,000 beds have installed patient power services, including 46,000 in the major hospitals targeted in the NHS Plan. The number of operational beds provided by patient power licence holders is shown in the table.

Licence Holder	*Number of operational beds*
Patientline	44,400
Wandsworth Electrical	3,713
Hospital Telephone Services	2,841
Kerfone	1,375
Premier Managed Payphones	100

Mr. Portillo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what proportion of the beds deemed suitable to receive telephone, television and radio services under the Patient Power Project have those services; [152034]

(2) how many and what proportion of NHS trusts have signed concession agreements with licence holders under the Patient Power project; [152035]

(3) how many installations under the Patient Power project will be completed by the end of 2004. [152036]

Mr. Hutton: Strong progress is being made with the patient power project. These facilities for patients are delivered at no cost to the National Health Service. As a result, the National Health Service has benefited from over £100 million of private sector investment.

The NHS Plan target states that patient power services will be available in every major hospital by the end of 2004, which means some 85,000 beds in 155 major hospitals in 125 trusts will have a system. Within major hospitals, over 46,000 beds of that target of 85,000 already have an operational system with almost a year to go before the NHS Plan deadline for installation. 122 of the 125 targeted trusts have signed a contract with a supplier and the remaining three are expected to sign shortly. In addition, NHS Estates has worked with suppliers to enable smaller hospitals to install a service. In total, 52,000 beds in 112 hospitals currently have the service. So far, a total of 149 trusts have signed a contract with a patient power licence holder.

Mr. Portillo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many licences have been awarded to firms to provide telephone, television and radio services to hospital patients' bedsides under the patient power project. [152037]

Mr. Hutton: Eight patient power suppliers have licences, five of which are full licences and three are provisional.

Prison Suicide

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the interim report of the three-year study being undertaken by Manchester university on behalf of his Department into prison suicide has been completed; if he will place a copy of the interim report in the Library; and if he will make a statement on the conclusions and recommendations. [151410]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Manchester University, on behalf of the Prison Service and the Department of Health, were asked to evaluate existing and new tools that help staff care for prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm. The evaluation of the existing tool (the F2052SH) was undertaken in 2002 and a report completed. The evaluation of the proposed new tool (the ACCT, that is being piloted in five prisons: Wandsworth, Feltham, Low Newton, Holme House and Woodhill) is not due for completion until later this year. A copy of the report on the F2052SH has been placed in the House Library.

Project Funding

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding is to be allocated for *(a)* implementation of the European Working Time Directive, *(b)* the Agenda for Change programme, *(c)* implementation of the new consultant contract and *(d)* implementation of the new general practitioner contract. [152625]

Mr. Hutton: Primary care trust (PCT) allocations for 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced on 11 December 2002.

Although none of the growth money has been identified for specific purposes, the allocations do include funding to support the roll-out of Agenda for Change and for the implementation of the consultant contract.

Additional funding, worth 0.8 per cent. of main allocations, has been allocated to PCTs in 2004–05 and a further 0.8 per cent. in 2005–06 to cover the costs of implementing Agenda for Change in acute and specialist hospital trusts, mental health trusts, ambulance trusts and PCTs themselves.

Additional funding, worth 0.3 per cent. of main allocations, has been allocated to PCTs in 2003–04, a further 0.1 per cent. in 2004–05 and a further 0.1 per cent. in 2005–06 for the implementation of the new consultant contract.

School Nurses

Mrs. Shephard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are employed in England as school nurses. [153900]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 9 February 2004]*: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Working Time Directive

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the implications of the Working Time Directive on the work of general practitioners. [151699]

Mr. Hutton: The Working Time Directive (WTD) is an integral part of modernising and improving services at all levels. Strategic health authorities are responsible for planning for implementation by trusts of the WTD for doctors in training from August 2004, as part of their overall national health service planning.

There are a range of solutions to WTD compliance which involve changing the working practices of both medical and non-medical staff. In some cases this may mean changes to the balance and pattern of primary care provision.

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish an update from the European Working Time Directive pilot sites. [152622]

Mr. Hutton: Reports from the Working Time Directive (WTD) pilots are posted on the Department's web-site at www.doh.gov.uk/workingtime/pilots.htm and on the Modernisation Agency web-site at www.modern.nhs.uk. While the pilots are underway, lessons from their experience, examples of good practice and other changes put in place by the pilots that may contribute to achieving WTD compliance are being shared with the National Health Service through the monthly bulletin, "Calling time".

HOME DEPARTMENT

Speed Fines

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated revenue from speed fines *(a)* is in the current financial year and *(b)* was in the previous financial year. [153091]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 5 February 2004]*: Information on the revenue raised from speeding fines is not available.

Available information shows the total number and amount of fines ordered to be paid following conviction for speeding offences within England and Wales for the calendar years 2000 and 2001. As the majority of such offences are dealt with by the issue of a fixed penalty, the table also shows the total amount of fixed penalties ordered to be paid.

Not all fines and fixed penalties will have been paid.

Information for 2002 will be available in the Spring.

Fines and fixed penalties data for speeding offences, England and Wales, 2000–01

	Court proceedings		Fixed penalties		
	Number of fines	Total amount of fine (£)	Average fine (£)	Number of tickets	Estimated revenue (£)[1]
2000	139,200	18,098,000	130	1,023,500	44,351,000
2001	133,500	17,622,000	132	1,233,000	73,980,000

[1] 'Estimate' based on £60 penalty charge.

Aggravated Burglary

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of trends in the grant of bail for those charged with aggravated burglary at domestic premises; and if he will make it his policy to seek a reduction in the grant of bail for such offences; [153329]

(2) what assessment he has made of trends in custodial sentencing for those convicted of aggravated burglary of domestic premises; and what his policy is on custodial sentencing for such offences. [153330]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* The available information, relating to the custody rate and average custodial sentence length for persons sentenced for domestic aggravated burglary in England and Wales, 1995 to 2002, is contained in the table. The figures show that both the custody rate and the average sentence length have increased since 1995.

The Government believe that custody should be reserved for dangerous and serious offenders. It is for the courts to impose appropriate sentences in individual cases, taking all circumstances into account.

The Government have always stressed the seriousness of the offence of burglary. The courts have robust sentencing powers in respect of aggravated burglary: the maximum penalty for the offence is life imprisonment.

Persons sentenced for offences of aggravated burglary[1] in a dwelling and those receiving immediate custody, England and Wales, 1995 to 2002

	Number of persons sentenced	Persons sentenced to immediate custody (inc. life)	Custody rate (percentage)	Average custodial sentence length (exc. life) (months)	Number of life sentences
1995	229	179	78.2	44.7	1
1996	278	220	79.1	44.3	..
1997	273	232	85.0	46.0	..
1998	224	196	87.5	46.0	1
1999	234	210	89.7	45.5	..
2000	194	179	92.3	48.6	..
2001	221	191	86.4	50.2	3
2002	288	254	88.2	50.1	3

[1] Data are on the principal offence basis

Source:
Offending and Criminal Justice Group, RDS.
Ref: IOS 72-04 4 February 2004

Of those received into prison under sentence for aggravated burglary in the five years 1998–2002, 82 per cent.-85 per cent. had previously been remanded in custody. These figures do not suggest that courts are unduly ready to grant bail to defendants accused of this offence.

Receptions into prison under an immediate custodial sentence for aggravated burglary: Proportion known to have been previously remanded in custody

	Percentage
1998	84
1999	83
2000	85
2001	82
2002	82

Anti-social Behaviour

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department over what period he will pilot the penalty fines for 16 and 17-year-olds contained in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003; and if he will publish an evaluation of the pilot. [152751]

Ms Blears: Taking account of the experience gained of the pilot scheme for adults, we have decided that the issues for 16 and 17-year-olds are essentially the same as for adults. We therefore propose to go ahead nationally with the scheme for 16 and 17-year-olds alongside the national rollout of the adult scheme. That will happen in police areas over the coming months as the necessary IT software becomes available. We will be evaluating the operation of the scheme for 16 to 17-year-olds on an interim basis after six months and again after 12 months. The results will be made available to the House.

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of links between trick or treat activities during Halloween with criminal behaviour. [145345]

Ms Blears: No assessment has been made of evidence that links trick or treat activities during Halloween with criminal behaviour.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which bodies will be consulted specifically on curfew orders and supervision orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. [153104]

Ms Blears: The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 provides for extension of the maximum length of curfew orders for 10 to 15-year-olds from three months to six months and the maximum time under supervision from 90 to 180 days. This is primarily to allow the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) to run for up to 12 months. We aim to pilot the extended ISSP from September 2004. We will be consulting beforehand on the guidance in particular with court Youth Offending Team, children's charity and ISSP interests together with the devolved administrations.

The Act also provides for intensive fostering within Supervision Orders, and we will consult on implementation with children's charity, family, Youth Offending Team and social services interests.

Bribery

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what targets have been set by his Department for investigation and prosecution of the offence of bribery of a foreign public official; [151378]

(2) what additional resources he has earmarked for enforcement of Part 12 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 since February 2002, and to which law enforcement agencies he has assigned them. [151379]

Paul Goggins: No specific targets have been set by the Home Office for the investigation and prosecution of the offence of bribery of a foreign public official, nor have any additional funds been allocated.

Burglary

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* charged, *(b)* prosecuted and *(c)* found guilty of burglary in each year since 1997; how many of these were (i) under 16, (ii) under 18 and (iii) under 21; and how many of those found guilty were given (A) custodial sentences and (B) non-custodial sentences, broken down by age group. [152598]

Paul Goggins: The available information is contained in the table and relates to persons proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty and sentenced at all courts for burglary of all types in England and Wales, 1997 to 2002.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Persons proceeded against at magistrates courts and those found guilty and at all courts for offences of burglary[1], by age, England and Wales, 1997

	Number of persons				
	Proceeded against	*Found guilty at all courts*	*Sentenced*	*Sentenced to custody*	*Given non-custodial sentences*
1997					
All ages	49,530	31,703	31,656	14,338	17,318
of whom:					
Aged 10 to 15	5,510	3,354	3,338	362	2,976
Aged 16 to 17	8,365	5,274	5,286	1,595	3,691
Aged 18 to 20	10,454	7,116	7,098	3,325	3,773
1998					
All ages	48,114	30,769	31,087	14,547	16,540
of whom:					
Aged 10 to 15	5,766	3,517	3,507	329	3,178
Aged 16 to 17	7,944	5,011	4,980	1,514	3,466
Aged 18 to 20	10,143	6,830	6,841	3,458	3,383
1999					
All ages	46,141	29,261	29,329	14,345	14,984
of whom:					
Aged 10 to 15	5,297	3,294	3,274	381	2,893
Aged 16 to 17	7,094	4,510	4,492	1,434	3,058
Aged 18 to 20	9,752	6,565	6,511	3,408	3,103
2000					
All ages	42,406	26,222	26,694	13,677	13,017
of whom:					
Aged 10 to 15	5,080	2,948	2,953	422	2,531
Aged 16 to 17	6,447	3,866	3,896	1,175	2,721
Aged 18 to 20	8,496	5,650	5,761	3,055	2,706
2001					
All ages	41,593	24,802	24,655	12,476	12,179
of whom:					
Aged 10 to 15	4,951	2,859	2,859	434	2,425
Aged 16 to 17	5,787	3,412	3,408	979	2,429
Aged 18 to 20	8,069	4,948	4,829	2,563	2,266
2002					
All ages	43,648	26,691	26,376	13,350	13,026
of whom:					
Aged 10 to 15	4,930	3,051	3,052	406	2,646
Aged 16 to 17	5,728	3,367	3,366	939	2,427
Aged 18 to 20	7,608	4,730	4,639	2,449	2,190

[1] These data are on the principal offence.

Camp Hill Prison

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many mentally ill prisoners are being held in the segregation unit at Camp Hill Prison; and if he will take steps to have them transferred to suitable accommodation. [153735]

Paul Goggins: Every effort is made to avoid holding prisoners with acute mental illness in the segregation unit at Camp Hill. On 9 February 2004 there were no such prisoners held there.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to increase the hours of purposeful activity for prisoners at Camp Hill Prison. [153738]

Paul Goggins: In 2003–04, HMP Camp Hill's level of purposeful activity has been reduced by the closure of the two main engineering workshops, in rotation, for major re-roofing work. The increased roll has exacerbated the fall in hours per prisoner.

I am pleased to confirm that the workshops are now functioning fully, and this, combined with a review of contracts, rationalisation of instructors, development of horticulture, a review of prisoners pay and the provision of 35 additional work places, will improve levels of purposeful activity. The target for 2004–05 is 22 hours per week.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the number of staff on sick leave at Camp Hill Prison. [153739]

Paul Goggins: During 2003 HMP Camp Hill has experienced significant levels of long term sick leave. A combination of phased returns to work and staff retirements has significantly reduced sickness absence.

Cannabis

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to public funds was per prosecution for cannabis related offences in each of the last five years. [151505]

Caroline Flint: It is not possible to provide a breakdown of criminal justice system costs in relation to cannabis prosecutions. However, the average cost per person proceeded against of a prosecution for a notifiable drugs offence is £13,072. This includes all the costs of the proceedings including punishment (prison or probation) but not investigation.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* fined and *(b)* given a prison sentence for (i) supplying, (ii) trafficking and (iii) possession of cannabis in each of the last five years. [151507]

Paul Goggins: The available information is contained in the table.

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Persons[1] fined and sentenced to immediate custody[2] for cannabis related offences England and Wales, 1998 to 2002

	1998		1999		2000	
Offence	*Persons fined*	*Persons sentenced to immediate custody*	*Persons fined*	*Persons sentenced to immediate custody*	*Persons fined*	*Persons sentenced to immediate custody*
Supplying or offering to supply (or being concerned in supplying or offering to supply) cannabis	155	656	116	573	68	405
Possession of cannabis with intent to supply	244	1,284	197	1,112	150	806
Production of or being concerned in the production of cannabis	637	216	499	206	394	156
Possession of cannabis	15,503	410	15,215	451	13,538	361

	2001		2002	
Offence	*Persons fined*	*Persons sentenced to immediate custody*	*Persons fined*	*Persons sentenced to immediate custody*
Supplying or offering to supply (or being concerned in supplying or offering to supply) cannabis	60	265	51	258
Possession of cannabis with intent to supply	100	618	103	547
Production of or being concerned in the production of cannabis	302	126	422	83
Possession of cannabis	12,960	290	14,123	241

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes unsuspended imprisonment, secure training orders, detention in a young offender institution and detention and training orders.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) on what date the meeting at which the decision was taken that an advertisement campaign to reiterate the illegality of cannabis should be launched was held; and if he will publish the minutes; [153948]

(2) which agencies were asked to bid for the advertisement campaign to reiterate the illegality of cannabis; and what prices they quoted; [153949]

(3) what methods he is using to measure the effectiveness of the advertising campaign to reiterate the illegality of cannabis; [153950]

(4) what criteria he used to decide that an advertising campaign to reiterate the illegality of cannabis was necessary; [153951]

(5) which agency handled the 2004 advertisement campaign to reiterate that cannabis is an illegal drug. [153983]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The agency Mother, which is the Home Office's incumbent agency for the drugs education campaign, FRANK, was retained for the reclassification of cannabis campaign aimed at persons under 18. They had participated in a full competitive pitch through the COI's roster of preferred providers and had been awarded a contract in October 2002.

The joint Home Office/ACPO advertising campaign aimed at adults was commissioned through ACPO and was based on proposals they had developed with their own agency.

Detailed planning for an advertising campaign started in summer 2003, when officials from the Home Office, Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills held a series of meetings. The proposal to launch a campaign was referred to by my right hon. noble and learned Friend the Baroness Scotland of Asthal, during the debate on the reclassification of cannabis on 12 November 2003, *Official Report, House of Lords*, column 1469. Specific prices quoted by agencies cannot be released as this would breach commercial in confidence rules.

The effectiveness of the advertising campaign reconfirming the illegality of cannabis is being measured through a survey with a representative sample of 14 to 17-year-olds. It will report on young people's attitudes as well as their understanding of the changes in the law. An industry-standard approach has been used, using

quantitative surveys with a representative sample before the campaign starts, followed by a second wave for comparison once the advertising has finished.

The Government are determined that nobody should be left in any doubt about the central message in regard to the reclassification of cannabis. The drug remains illegal and is harmful. The advertising is just one strand of a wide range of communications activity which includes leaflets, posters, postcards and education packs for schools and professionals.

Cheadle Royal Hospital

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his Answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 502W, on Cheadle Royal Hospital, what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that *(a)* all the income received by the charity has been applied to the properly authorised charitable purposes and *(b)* all the assets of the charity have been sold or reassigned in accordance with charity law, with particular reference to section 36(8) of the Charities Act 1993. [151001]

Fiona Mactaggart: I confirmed in my Answers of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 766W and 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 502W, that neither the Charity Commission nor the Greater Manchester police have found evidence of charitable income or assets being inappropriately used by the trustees of Cheadle Royal Hospital.

Community Sentence Breaches

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women were sentenced to immediate custody in England and Wales following breach of a community sentence in each year since 1992. [151425]

Paul Goggins: The information requested, for the years 1992 to 2002 is contained in the table.

Persons[1] sentenced to immediate custody[2] for breaches of community sentences[3], England and Wales, 1992–2002

	Males	Females	Total
1992	2,361	51	2,412
1993	2,909	64	2,973
1994	5,291	228	5,519
1995	5,914	238	6,152
1996	6,265	323	6,588
1997	6,779	426	7,205
1998	5,928	473	6,401
1999	6,925	648	7,573
2000	7,583	740	8,323
2001	7,286	817	8,103
2002	8,151	936	9,087

[1] Includes a person more than once if sentenced to immediate custody for a breach of more than one type of community sentence on the same day.

[2] Includes partly suspended sentences, unsuspended imprisonment, secure training orders, detention in a young offender institution and detention and training orders. Some of the persons shown may be sentenced to non-effective custody for the breach if also sentenced to custody for the fresh offence which caused the breach.

[3] Includes probation orders (community rehabilitation orders from April 2001), supervision orders, community service orders (community punishment orders from April 2001), attendance centre orders, combination orders (community punishment and rehabilitation orders from April 2001), curfew orders, reparation orders (from June 2000), action plan orders (from June 2000), drug treatment and testing orders (from October 2000) and referral orders (from April 2002).

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn of this year.

Community Support Officers

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of the pilot schemes giving community support officers the right to detain people for 30 minutes will be published. [153332]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 6 February 2004]*: At present six police forces are piloting the power of detention, which was given to community support officers by the Police Reform Act 2002. The forces are the Metropolitan Police Service, West Yorkshire Police, Gwent Police, Lancashire Constabulary, Northamptonshire Police, and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. The pilot is scheduled to last until December 2004.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) with the assistance of the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate are conducting an evaluation of the use of this power.

HMIC have recently initiated an interim review of the first 12 months and have indicated to me that an interim report will be provided this year with the full report available for March 2005. These reports will be published and laid before the House once they have been completed.

Contingency Planning

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's preparedness for a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) incident. [152266]

Mr. Blunkett *[holding answer 3 February 2004]*: I refer the hon. Member to my reply I gave him of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1039W, and my statement of 3 March 2003, *Official Report*, columns 72–73WS.

I plan to update the House on the UK's Resilience to major emergencies shortly.

Crime/Police Statistics (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many drug-related offences were recorded in Southend in each of the last 10 years; and how many successful prosecutions were brought in each year, broken down by type of drug involved; [152202]

(2) how many violent offences were recorded in Southend in each of the last 10 years; and how many successful convictions there were for violent offences in each of the last 10 years. [152203]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 3 February 2004]*: The numbers of drug-related offences recorded in Southend are not collected centrally. In addition, the specific drug offences in the recorded crime statistics, namely drug trafficking, possession and other drug offences, are not collected centrally for Southend. Again, it is not possible to provide prosecution data for drug related offences

from the Court Proceedings database. Data for those proceeded against and found guilty specifically for drug offences in the last five years in the South East Essex Petty Sessional Area is given in Table A.

Recorded crime figures for six key offences are collected and published at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), and Basic Command Unit (BCD) level. The six offences include the violent crimes of Violence against the person, Sexual offences and Robbery. Table B gives the number of violent crimes recorded in the Southend CDRP since 1999–2000 which is the year CDRP data were first collected centrally. The available Court Proceedings data from 1998 are given in Table C.

Table A: Number of defendants proceeded against and found guilty for drug offences at South East Essex Petty Sessional Area (PSA)[1] including those found guilty at the Crown court where South East Essex PSA was the committing court[2], 1998 to 2002

	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*
1998	263	248
1999	336	293
2000	280	252
2001	258	231
2002	235	205

[1] Covers Southend and some parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.
[2] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Table B: Violent crime offences recorded in Southend CDRP

Offence	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[1]
Violence against the person	1,463	1,414	1,444	3,043
Sexual offences	157	135	139	195
Robbery	166	148	217	313

[1] Essex Police implemented the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) on 1 April 2002. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police. Therefore, following the introduction of the Standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not comparable with previous years.

Table C: Number of defendants proceeded against and found guilty for Violence against the Person, Sexual offences and Robbery at South East Essex Petty Sessional Area[1] including those found guilty at the Crown court where South East Essex PSA was the committing court[2], 1998 to 2002

Year/Offence group	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
1998		
Violence against the Person	421	171
Sexual offences	38	10
Robbery	38	19
1999		
Violence against the person	353	162
Sexual offences	41	15
Robbery	28	17
2000		
Violence against the person	290	127
Sexual offences	23	12
Robbery	28	12
2001		
Violence against the person	351	120
Sexual offences	27	8
Robbery	31	13
2002		
Violence against the person	292	145
Sexual offences	45	12
Robbery	49	15

[1] Covers Southend and some parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.
[2] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Drug Treatment

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug offenders *(a)* in prison and *(b)* in the community received treatment for drug problems in 2002–03. [153715]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service does not collect data in the exact format requested. The numbers of people receiving treatment for drug misuse are not listed by offence type. However, data are available for those in custody and in the community.

In 2002–03 the numbers of people who received treatment for drug problems while in custody in England and Wales are listed in the following table.

	Number
CARATs[1]	51,970
Detoxification	50,701
Rehabilitation	4,386

[1] Counselling Assessment, Referral, Advice and Through-care services—a low-level intervention that provides a gateway assessment, referral and support service to prisoners both within custody and upon their initial release.

The number of people who received treatment for drug problems in the community was 140,900.

Firearms

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will retain the Firearms Consultative Committee until the end of the consultation period. [R] [153044]

Caroline Flint: I refer to the statement I made on 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 20. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has decided not to extend further the life of the Firearms Consultative Committee. The Government are considering the establishment of a new consultative structure which will facilitate the submission of views on a broader basis than was allowed for under a statutory framework.

Graffiti

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what programmes his Department funds aimed at diverting those who graffiti to productive activities. [153606]

Ms Blears: The Home Office provides £7 million per year to the Youth Justice Board (YJB). We are providing funding until April 2006. The Youth Justice Board's Youth Inclusion Project includes the Community Merit Award programmes, which reward positive contributions to the community such as cleaning graffiti.

£15 million has been given to the Positive Futures programme, which is aimed at marginalised children from 10 to 19 years old in the most deprived areas. This programme focuses on building links to education, training and employment and diverts young people from anti-social activities such as graffiti.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Mayor of London concerning graffiti in London. [153609]

Ms Blears: There have been no discussions with the Mayor of London concerning graffiti in London.

However in November 2003 we launched the Name that Tag poster campaign which offers a £500 reward for information about targeted prolific taggers. This campaign is a partnership between the Home Office, Crimestoppers, Network Rail London Underground and British Transport Police and runs in London, Liverpool and Manchester. It sends a clear message to taggers that we have had enough of their nuisance and they will be caught.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether anti-social behaviour orders can be imposed on those convicted of graffiti-related offences. [153611]

Ms Blears: Yes. Anti-social behaviour orders can be granted where it has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that an individual has acted in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm and distress to others, and where the court judges that an order is necessary to protect people from further anti-social acts.

For example, the British Transport Police have obtained a number of orders on those who do graffiti prohibiting them from carrying the implements with which to do so and from trespassing on non-public areas of London Underground or railway property.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will issue policy guidance to the police to take action to reduce the number of heavy goods vehicles using the third lane on motorways. [153249]

Caroline Flint: I agree with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that guidance is unnecessary at this time.

The majority of HGV drivers adhere to the law and do not use the third lane. I know there will always be a small minority who exercise poor lane discipline, and their actions can cause annoyance. There is however little evidence to suggest this is causing any significant problem.

Home Detention Curfew

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners released on home detention curfew (HDC) since January 1999 *(a)* have been convicted, *(b)* have been cautioned, *(c)* have been prosecuted and *(d)* are awaiting prosecution whilst on HDC. [152705]

Paul Goggins: I will write to the hon. Member.

Identity Card

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps will be taken by his Department to minimise the potential for identity card fraud *(a)* before and *(b)* following the introduction of the proposed identity card scheme. [152680]

Beverley Hughes: The Government are committed to maximising the security of the identity card scheme. Security is central to the design of the IT systems, the processes and the card itself. Following introduction of the scheme the Government will work to maintain the scheme's security and to combat fraudulent use, building on experience gained manufacturing and issuing other sensitive documents such as passports and residence permits.

Within the scheme the use of biometric technology will be key to ensuring security and defeating attempts at fraud. A trial examining the use of biometrics in identity cards is currently under way, led by the UK Passport Service.

Police

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the benefits to Gwent Police of the Tetra communication system. [153031]

Ms Blears: By mid-2006, all police forces in England, Wales and Scotland will be using Airwave, their new radio system.

Airwave provides modern and efficient radiocommunications, giving excellent coverage and secure transmissions and improving the safety of police officers and the public.

In Gwent, officers are able to use Airwave handsets in 96 per cent. of the force area, compared with 30 per cent. coverage using the old radio system. Airwave car radios can be used in 99 per cent. of the force area, compared with 90 per cent. previously. This increased coverage allows officers to attend incidents safely in areas such as Forest Coalpit, Llanthony and the Wye Valley, which was not possible with the previous radio system.

Police Disciplinary Procedures

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with chief constables concerning the impact on staff morale of long-term suspensions and investigations of police officers. [152447]

Ms Blears: There have been discussions on suspensions in which staff morale was raised but the main features of those discussions were to do with the operational and public interest needs of keeping an officer suspended. Such discussions related to the operation of the power to suspend police officers under the Police (Conduct) Regulations 1999 and the supporting guidance and were conducted within a sub-group of the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales. The Association of Chief Police Officers is represented on this sub-group as are the Superintendents' Association and the Police Federation. As a result of discussions held, the guidance on suspension was amended in November 2003 in a number of respects including a requirement to ensure that the continuing need for suspension is subject to, at least, monthly reviews.

There have been no discussions concerning the impact on staff morale of the investigation of police officers. Staff morale is a matter for the chief constable and his

human resources department. Every officer who is suspended has the support of the staff associations and access to the force staff welfare department.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average *(a)* time and *(b)* cost of the suspension of police officers in England and Wales where complaints were made against them was in the latest period for which figures are available. [152452]

Ms Blears: Information concerning the *(a)* time and *(b)* cost of the suspension of police officers in England and Wales is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. I cannot therefore provide the average requested.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he makes of the *(a)* cash costs of complaints against police officers and *(b)* the length of time they take to resolve when determining the budget of each police authority. [152454]

Ms Blears: No central assessment is made of the cash costs of complaints against police officers. This is a matter for individual police authorities and forces.

The budget of each police force is a matter for each police authority. The funding formula used as the basis for allocating Home Office police grant to police authorities takes into account general operational needs, but does not specifically address complaints investigation costs.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the costs of the suspension by Devon and Cornwall Constabulary of Stuart Elford, identifying the *(a)* associated legal fees, *(b)* cost of the investigation and *(c)* cost of the involvement of the Police Complaints Authority. [152455]

Ms Blears: Devon and Cornwall Constabulary have advised that Stuart Elford was paid £57,500 in salary and housing allowance during the period of his suspension. I am also advised that:

(a) no external legal fees were incurred by Devon and Cornwall Constabulary during the course of the investigation;

(b) the estimated cost of the investigation was £6,500; and

(c) the Police Complaints Authority do not cost their involvement in individual investigations.

Police Grants

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to inform police authorities of the amounts that they will receive from specific grants for the financial year 2004–05. [150632]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: Police Authorities are notified of specific grant allocations as soon as they are decided.

Details of the largest Fund (£277 million), The Crime Fighting Fund, as well as the £30 million Rural Policing Fund, were announced on 19 November. We are shortly to announce allocations for the Street Crime Initiative (£24 million)

Allocations of Basic Command Unit funding (£50 million) will be announced shortly, as will those for Special Priority Payments which are based on force budgeted paybill returns.

Police authorities are aware that in 2004–05 they will receive continuation funding (75 per cent.) for Community Support Officers recruited in 2002–03 and 50 per cent. funding for officers who are in some cases still being recruited in 2003–04. Final figures will be announced when the full costs are clear.

Payments of grant for the London Pay Lead and South East Allowances are based on force returns throughout the year.

Police Numbers

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many police officers there were in each police force in the United Kingdom in each year since 1997; [152596]

(2) how many *(a)* Ministry of Defence police officers, *(b)* British Transport Police officers, *(c)* UK Atomic Energy Constabulary officers, *(d)* Port of Dover Police officers, *(e)* National Crime Squad officers and *(f)* police force officers there were in each year since 1997. [152597]

Ms Blears: The table gives the number of police officers from 1997 to 2003 in each police force area in England and Wales.

Information relating to Scotland and Northern Ireland are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Police officer strength[1]

	March						
	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]
Avon and Somerset	2,989	2,976	2,999	2,934	2,994	3,096	3,149
Bedfordshire	1,094	1,079	1,041	1,028	1,036	1,069	1,106
Cambridgeshire	1,302	1,291	1,274	1,237	1,296	1,362	1,384
Cheshire	2,046	2,042	2,071	2,011	2,002	2,059	2,119
Cleveland	1,459	1,483	1,416	1,404	1,407	1,461	1,582
Cumbria	1,144	1,164	1,126	1,084	1,048	1,100	1,140
Derbyshire	1,791	1,772	1,759	1,777	1,823	1,848	2,003
Devon and Cornwall	2,865	2,962	2,887	2,841	2,934	3,053	3,202
Dorset	1,284	1,310	1,279	1,306	1,354	1,381	1,416
Durham	1,461	1,515	1,568	1,558	1,595	1,614	1,651
Essex	2,961	2,928	2,891	2,806	2,897	2,946	2,989
Gloucestershire	1,133	1,104	1,104	1,114	1,173	1,183	1,227
Greater Manchester	6,922	6,949	6,810	6,795	6,909	7,217	7,343
Hampshire	3,452	3,490	3,473	3,419	3,438	3,480	3,668

Police officer strength[1]

	1997	1998	1999	March 2000	2001	2002	2003[2]
Hertfordshire	1,759	1,740	1,724	1,767	1,922	1,825	1,957
Humberside	2,045	2,021	1,974	1,932	1,917	2,058	2,105
Kent	3,260	3,251	3,201	3,204	3,319	3,355	3,487
Lancashire	3,247	3,257	3,245	3,179	3,255	3,304	3,339
Leicestershire	1,949	1,983	1,993	1,993	2,032	2,100	2,114
Lincolnshire	1,196	1,191	1,140	1,115	1,202	1,198	1,221
City of London	859	825	778	732	703	764	808
Merseyside	4,230	4,216	4,211	4,085	4,081	4,125	4,099
Metropolitan Police	26,677	26,094	26,073	25,485	24,878	26,223	27,984
Norfolk	1,432	1,430	1,381	1,381	1,420	1,468	1,499
Northamptonshire	1,177	1,169	1,137	1,117	1,157	1,214	1,210
Northumbria	3,677	3,769	3,840	3,788	3,857	3,929	3,943
North Yorkshire	1,338	1,367	1,337	1,283	1,305	1,417	1,444
Nottinghamshire	2,323	2,323	2,225	2,204	2,275	2,330	2,411
South Yorkshire	3,159	3,182	3,168	3,163	3,197	3,199	3,183
Staffordshire	2,211	2,292	2,238	2,170	2,129	2,133	2,202
Suffolk	1,180	1,186	1,190	1,145	1,133	1,203	1,253
Surrey	1,620	1,608	1,662	1,785	2,066	1,992	1,906
Sussex	3,085	2,996	2,847	2,822	2,855	2,893	2,989
Thames Valley	3,695	3,776	3,748	3,740	3,703	3,762	3,833
Warwickshire	926	924	908	900	926	969	997
West Mercia	2,040	2,010	2,025	1,887	1,951	2,018	2,256
West Midlands	7,113	7,156	7,321	7,194	7,423	7,681	7,751
West Yorkshire	5,209	5,155	4,982	4,822	4,815	4,889	5,029
Wiltshire	1,154	1,156	1,151	1,118	1,120	1,157	1,158
Dyfed-Powys	1,005	1,002	1,026	1,040	1,055	1,132	1,149
Gwent	1,243	1,233	1,247	1,264	1,274	1,333	1,341
North Wales	1,369	1,396	1,391	1,403	1,444	1,506	1,539
South Wales	2,976	2,986	2,981	2,926	3,154	3,222	3,239
Total	125,051	124,756	123,841	121,956	123,476	127,267	131,426

[1] Full-time equivalents
[2] Comparable strength

Police Officers (Sickness Absence)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the sickness rate for each police force was in the last year for which figures are available. [151600]

Ms Blears: Sickness absence rates for the police service from April 2002 to March 2003 were published by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary in his Annual Report for 2003. A copy is available in the Library.

Prison Accommodation

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many modular temporary units have been erected in prisons in the past five years; and how many prisoners they house, broken down by prison. [153736]

Paul Goggins: The number of Modular Temporary Units (MTUs) across the Prison estate in England and Wales stands at 29. Between them, they hold a total of 1,160 prisoners. A breakdown by establishment is given in the table.

Location	Number of MTUs	Number of places
North Sea Camp	2	80
Hollesley Bay	2	80
Standford Hill	2	80
Wealston	2	80
Highpoint (male)	2	80
Leyhill	2	80
Hatfield	2	80
Spring Hill	2	80
Whatton	1	40
Prescoed	1	40
Wayland	1	40
Stocken	1	40
Channings Wood	1	40
Acklington	1	40
Wymott	1	40
Erlestoke	1	40
New Hall	1	40
Low Newton	1	40
Sudbury	1	40
Kirklevington	1	40
Camp Hill	1	40
Total	29	1,160

Prison Officers

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will change the position whereby a prison officer who has been wounded by a prisoner cannot be told whether that prisoner is HIV positive or carrying hepatitis. [152712]

Paul Goggins: As in the national health service, health information is collected in prisons in confidence and may normally be disclosed only with the consent of the person concerned. Prison establishments have been instructed that, where such consent is not given, the confidentiality of prisoners known to be infected with HIV or hepatitis must be protected.

Some prisoners will be unaware of their own medical status. Prison staff have therefore been advised that, in all risk situations, they should proceed on the assumption that any body fluids may be infectious and that universal routine precautions should always be taken.

The Prison Service's "Health Services for Prisoners" Standard (July 2002) requires all establishments to make sure that written information on communicable disease control policy is available to staff and prisoners, including protocols for the provision of post-exposure prophylaxis. The usual practice would be for the injured person to attend a local hospital for counselling, assessment and, if clinically indicated, treatment.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when the prison officers Mr. Rowland, Mr. Kerry and Mr. Watkins will be allowed back to work; [150817]

(2) for what reason prison officers Mr. Rowland, Mr. Kerry and Mr. Watkins are suspended; and if he will make a statement. [150819]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Following the end of the criminal trial against Mr. Rowland, Mr. Kerry and Mr. Watkins, the Governor of Elmley will now carry out a review in the case of each of the prison officers, based on all the information available, to see what further action should be taken. The review will be completed as quickly as possible.

Prisoners

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners aged 65 years and over are serving prison sentences and were convicted after their 65th birthday. [152755]

Paul Goggins: At the end of November 2003, there were 689 sentenced prisoners in prison in England and Wales who were aged 65 and above. 403 of these prisoners had been convicted after their 65th birthday.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners are studying with the Open University. [152836]

Paul Goggins: The Government are committed to providing a range of educational opportunities to meet offenders' needs. From this year we are releasing more funds to support Open University study in order to ensure that we are offering a more balanced curriculum.

Our focus is primarily on helping offenders to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills. Nevertheless, 601 Open University courses were taken by prisoners in the academic year 2002–03. This represents 3 per cent. of those prisoners who were involved in education at the end of that academic year.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent steps he has taken to reduce the number of prisoners escaping from prison. [152839]

Paul Goggins: Against the backdrop of a steadily increasing population, the Prison Service has achieved a much-improved performance on escapes from prison and from escort over the last decade. There have been no escapes by Category A prisoners since 1995. Escapes overall have been driven down from 347 in 1992–93 to 50 in 2002–03. There have been 45 escapes so far in the current financial year. The Public Service Agreement target is that there should be no Category A escapes and that the number of other escapes should not exceed 0.17 per cent. of annual average population. Performance is well within that target. The escape rate in 2002–03 was 0.07 per cent. of annual average population.

This improvement has been achieved through a range of measures, including investment in physical security technology; tighter procedural security; more effective performance management and audit and a strong lead from senior managers; greater security awareness and good levels of compliance with best practice.

The Escapes Delivery Plan seeks to ensure that the current good performance is maintained. The plan is managed by a project board, chaired by the Deputy Director General of the Prison Service. Membership includes representatives from the police and the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The figures given for escapes relate only to escapes from closed prison or external escorts, mostly to court or hospital. They exclude those where the prisoner was recaptured within 15 minutes.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people aged 60 years and over in England and Wales were *(a)* convicted of an offence and *(b)* received a custodial sentence in 2003. [153335]

Paul Goggins: The total number of persons aged 60 and over who were convicted of indictable offences in England and Wales in 2002, was 2,324 of whom 620 were sentenced to immediate custody.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisoners aged 65 years and over had long-term illnesses in each year since 1997; [153336]

(2) if he will make a statement on prison resources directed at the nursing care of prisoners over the age of 65 years. [153338]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available centrally. Prisons, work in partnership with their local health care partners to assess the health care needs of all prisoners, irrespective of age, and to develop services to meet them.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people *(a)* of all ages and *(b)* aged 65 years and over died in prison in each year since 1997. [153337]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is provided in the table.

	Number of deaths of prisoners aged 64 and under	*Number of deaths of prisoners aged 65 and over*	*Total number of deaths of prisoners*
1997	113	8	121
1998	128	10	138
1999	140	9	149
2000	127	17	144
2001	120	21	141
2002	148	18	166
2003	160	21	181
Total	936	104	1,040

Deaths in prison remain a rare but distressing event, affecting families, staff and other prisoners deeply. Prisons work in partnership with their local healthcare partners to assess the health care needs of all prisoners, irrespective of age, and to develop services to meet them.

Sadly, the largest proportion of under-65s who die in custody take their own lives; meanwhile, over-65s are more likely to die of natural causes. Good care and support from staff saves many lives, but such instances go largely unreported. 141 prisoners were resuscitated following self-harm incidents in 2002, and a further 197 prisoners were resuscitated during the first 11 months of 2003, which reflects a lot of staff effort and skill.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many reported incidents of violence there have been against prisoners *(a)* of all ages and *(b)* aged 65 years and over in each year since 1997. [153339]

Paul Goggins: In April 2003 a new measure of violence toward prisoners was introduced, based on the number of reported serious assaults. This replaced the previous measure, which was based on positive adjudications for assault. Work to improve data quality may have had an impact on the figures reported. Information is not held centrally on those offences towards prisoners aged 65 and over. The figures given in the following table are based on the financial year.

	Serious assault on inmate
April—December 2003	611
2002–03	582
2001–02	507
2000–01	534
1999–2000	509
1998–99	380
1997–98	409
1996–97	372

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many dogs trained to locate drugs are working in prisons; and how many days those dogs worked in the last 12 months. [152713]

Paul Goggins: There are 439 drug dogs working in prisons in England and Wales. Of these 236 are active dogs and 203 are passive dogs. Comprehensive information about the number of days Prison Service drug dogs work is not held centrally and could not be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Prison Service takes to obtain medical records about a prisoner's mental health from clinicians who have provided treatment prior to imprisonment. [152920]

Paul Goggins: Prison establishments were reminded, in guidance issued in May 2002, of the importance of effective information sharing with other agencies, in particular the NHS, in enabling continuity of care. This guidance requires them, generally with the prisoner's consent, to request any information required from a prisoner's general practitioner or other relevant service with which the prisoner has recently been in contact. It also sets out the circumstances in which information may be requested and disclosed without consent.

Mental health in-reach teams are now operating in 90 establishments with the greatest need, which means that prisoners with a severe mental illness are generally being cared for by the national health service. One of the key elements of this in-reach service is the maintenance of links with outside services in order to achieve continuity of care.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent estimate he has made of the *(a)* total prison population, *(b)* number of prisoners on remand and *(c)* number in each case suffering from severe or acute mental illness. [152943]

Paul Goggins: On 30 January 2004, there were 73,688 people in prison in England and Wales, of which 13,173 were remand prisoners. Information on the number of prisoners with severe or acute mental illness is not held centrally.

Using information collected from a survey of psychiatric morbidity among prisoners in England and Wales undertaken in 1997 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) it is estimated that there will at any one time be around 5,000 prisoners with a severe mental illness. Not all of these prisoners will necessarily be acutely ill.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he is measuring the success of the three-year Proactive Project to reduce self-harm and suicides in prison; and when the results will be available. [154175]

Paul Goggins: Reducing the rate of self-inflicted deaths in prison establishments is an essential part of the Prison Service's decency agenda and a priority for Ministers. The three-year safer custody strategy to develop policies and practices to reduce prisoner suicide and manage self-harm in prisons, implemented from April 2001, has been under review during recent months. Account is being taken of emerging findings from in-house and external researchers, as well as the views of a wide range of practitioners and external interests, including Samaritans, Prison Reform Trust, Howard League and INQUEST.

I will be announcing the results of this work and next steps in the Spring. A team from the University of Cambridge is measuring the impact of the Safer Locals Programme on the quality of prison life, and investigating possible links between these measures and rates of suicide and self-harm. Early findings suggest

that there are significant associations between levels of prisoner distress and an establishment's rates of self-inflicted death. Aspects of the quality of prison life that are associated with prisoner distress include distress on entry to custody, perceived safety, opportunities for personal development, and perceived fairness.

A team from Manchester and London Universities is also evaluating elements of the Safer Locals Programme, particularly Health care provision, detoxification services and a workstream called the Care of At-Risk Prisoners (revision of the 'self-harm at risk' From 2052SH) project. Additionally, researchers from the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science were commissioned to evaluate the impact of Safer Cells on Suicide and self-harm. The evaluation included observations, interview and focus groups with prisoners and staff in six prisons. The report, presented in August 2003, concluded that the safer cells programme has much to commend it and recommended that the programme continue.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the members of the *(a)* Community Development Foundation, *(b)* Criminal Justice Consultative Council, *(c)* Misuse of Drugs Tribunal, *(d)* Visiting Committee, Immigration Detention Centre, Harmondsworth, *(e)* Prison Service Board of Visitors and *(f)* Visiting Committee, Immigration Detention Centre, Tinsley House were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151814]

Fiona Mactaggart: The table lists the members of the following bodies on 1 January; their term of office; and whether they are remunerated.

The following should be noted:

1. The Misuse of Drugs Tribunal has not sat for many years and is obsolete.

2. It is the practice not to publish the names of the members of the Independent Monitoring Boards (IMB) (legally known as the Boards of Visitors and the Visiting Committees) for reasons of security and because of concerns for their personal safety. There are 1,773 members of the IMB and they are appointed for a maximum of three years, and if their performance is assessed satisfactorily and they wish to continue, they are re-appointed for another three years. IMB members are not remunerated but can claim expenses.

Community Development Foundation	*Term of office*	*Whether remunerated*
Andrew Selous MP	3 years 1 month	No
Andrew Robinson	3 years	No
Suhail Aziz	3 years	No
Michael Hamilton	3 years 7 months	No
Colin Williams QBE	3 years	No
Hilary Willmer	3 years 7 months	No
Abdul Ismail	3 years 7 months	No
Dr Gareth Jones	3 years 7 months	No
Peter Latchford	3 years	No
Professor Ruth Lister CBE	3 years	No
Jogwant Johal	3 years	No
Avila Kilmurray	3 years	No
Mavis Best MBE	3 years	No

Criminal Justice Council (formerly the Criminal Justice Consultative Council)	*Term of office*	*Whether remunerated*
Lord Justice John Kay (Chair)	3 years	No
Judge Alan Wilkie QC	3 years	No
HHJ Richard Wakerley	3 years	No
Sir David Hatch CBE JP	3 years	No
Dame Helen Reeves DBE	3 years	No
Judge Davinder Lachar	3 years	No
George Mitchell CBE JP	3 years	No
Rodney Warren	3 years	No
Nicholas Purnell QC	3 years	No
Withiel Cole	3 years	No
Professor Di Birch	3 years	No
Professor John Raine	3 years	No
Neil Clarke	3 years	No
Richard Collins	3 years	No
Paul Cavadino	3 years	No

Rape

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on sentencing guidance for rape convictions. [153662]

Paul Goggins: The maximum sentence for rape is life imprisonment. Sentences in individual cases are a matter for the courts, taking into account the circumstances of the offence and the offender including all mitigating and aggravating factors.

It will be possible to sentence offenders to the new sentence of imprisonment for public protection introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003. This scheme allows for those who pose a continued risk to the public to be kept in prison for an indeterminate period of time.

The Sentencing Guidelines Council was also set up by the 2003 Act with the purpose of issuing guidance so as to bring about greater clarity and consistency in sentencing. The council will be considering guidance on sex offences as one of its first priorities.

Sexual Offenders (Granting of Bail)

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were charged with serious sexual offences and given bail in each of the last five years. [150801]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available.

Estimates of police and magistrates' courts remand decisions for England and Wales, broken down by type of offence (i.e. indictable, summary non-motoring and summary motoring offences), are published in chapter 5 of Criminal Statistics England and Wales 2002 Cm 6054.

Of those males received into prison during 2002 under an immediate custodial sentence for a sexual offence it is known that 52 per cent. had previously been remanded in custody.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Oral Answer to the

hon. Member for Southend, West of 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 615, how much money was raised in fines from *(a)* speed cameras and *(b)* speed traps in each year since their inception in (i) Southend, West and (ii) Southend. [153473]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 9 February 2004]*: Available information on the number of fixed penalties and court fines ordered to be paid for the offence of 'speeding detected by camera' in the calendar years 1997 to 2001 is shown in the table. It is not possible from the data collected centrally to identify Southend, West and Southend within the police force area of Essex.

Information is not available on speed traps as the police do not use this as an enforcement tool.

Information for 2002 will be available in the spring.

Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for speeding offences detected by cameras[1,2] in the Essex police force area, 1997–2001

	Fixed penalties	Court proceedings			
	Number of tickets[3]	Estimated revenue (£)[4]	Number of fines	Total amount of fine (£)	Average fine (£)[5]
1997	18,800	753,700	880	93,900	107
1998	8,700	346,600	1,700	227,400	134
1999	19,800	791,400	2,100	357,400	169
2000	46,300	2,007,200	2,800	317,800	115
2001	81,900	4,911,100	6,500	651,200	101

[1] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999.
[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[3] Paid, i.e. no further action.
[4] Estimate based on £40 fixed penalty charge to October 2000. From November 2000 the penalty was raised to £60.
[5] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.
Note:
Reliable data only available from 1997 onwards for speeding.

Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for all speeding offences[1] in the Essex police force area, 1997–2001

	Fixed penalties	Court proceedings			
	Number of tickets[2]	Estimated revenue (£)[2]	Number of fines	Total amount of fine (£)	Average fine (£)[4]
1997	48,100	1,924,900	5,000	643,600	128
1998	19,300	771,300	4,700	675,200	142
1999	57,900	2,315,100	6,600	933,900	141
2000	102,300	4,434,100	6,300	774,900	123
2001	168,900	10,133,100	9,100	1,020,100	112

[1] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[2] Paid, i.e. no further action.
[3] Estimate based on £40 fixed penalty charge to October 2000. From November 2000 the penalty was raised to £60.
[4] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.

Schools Liaison Officers

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police authorities have appointed schools liaison officers. [153060]

Ms Blears: This information is not held centrally. The appointment of schools liaison officers is an operational matter, and is a decision for Chief Officers.

Tetra Masts

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any applications for planning permission for Tetra masts have described the modulation characteristics as pulsed. [153016]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 5 February 2004]*: The Home Office is not directly involved in the mast planning process. Planning applications for Tetra masts for the new police radio system, Airwave, are a matter for the network provider, Airwave mmO_2.

The modulation scheme used by Tetra is known as Differential Quaternary Phase Shift Keying (DQPSK).

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 11 February 2004

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff in her Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved were in each of the cases listed. [151648]

Alun Michael: Records only exist for the period since Defra came into existence in June 2001. There have been no cases in that period.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of whether there are *(a)* physiological and *(b)* neurological differences between rabbits and moles, and badgers, which would affect their response to poisoning by fumigants, in terms of the distress and pain caused. [153926]

Alun Michael: All pesticides used as fumigants are subject to strict regulatory control and must be approved by Ministers before they can be marketed or used in the UK. Those seeking approval for such products are required to provide data to ensure that the product is safe, effective and humane.

No specific assessment is made of physiological or neurological differences between rabbits and moles in response to poisoning by pesticide fumigants.

However, the Advisory Committee on Pesticides considered a report in 1996 on humaneness of vertebrate control agents, which resulted in the loss of one pesticide fumigant substance and approval for the remaining pesticide fumigant products to continue. Data on humaneness of pesticide fumigants in relation to the target test species, such as rabbits and moles were considered.

Use of pesticide fumigants against badgers, which are protected species, is not permitted, except in special circumstances, and as such would not have been considered.

Crematoriums

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will conduct *(a)* quantified and *(b)* qualified research into mercury emissions from crematoriums prior to reaching a decision on whether gas cleaning systems should be fitted. [153430]

Alun Michael: I refer to the reply to my hon. Friend on 17 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 624W, concerning the consultation paper the Department issued containing an assessment undertaken by the Environment Agency of the case for tackling mercury emissions from crematoria. The assessment included a review of the available mercury monitoring data and of estimates of mercury emissions from crematoria. Several of the responses to the consultation raised concerns that the emission estimates were uncertain. We recognise that there remain uncertainties and that these will have to be taken into account in reaching a decision on the extent to which gas cleaning will be required. The uncertainties do not extend to the health impacts of mercury nor affect our long-standing policy approach, as summarised in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Peterborough (Mrs. Clark) on 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, columns 99 and 100W.

Officials are currently in discussion with representative cremation organisations to develop a fair mechanism for reducing emissions from a proportion of existing crematoria which is what is needed to fulfil the Governments policy objectives. We will be consulting in due course on detailed proposals, including what that proportion should be.

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the *(a)* thickness and *(b)* stiffness of twine on the escape properties of a trawl net; [150237]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the use of double twine in the construction of trawl nets on the selectivity of gear; and what the effect has been of permitting the use of different thicknesses of twine on the size of fish caught in North Sea fisheries; [150238]

(3) what the impact of lightweight high-strength fibres on the *(a)* selectivity properties and *(b)* fishing performance of trawl nets is. [150482]

Mr. Bradshaw: The effect of the thickness of modern twines on selectivity of whitefish gears was first studied in 1993 at the FRS Marine Laboratory Aberdeen. Since then several further UK studies have been completed. Thicker twine has been found to reduce selectivity. In the case of double twine a decrease in thickness from 6mm to 4mm has an effect equivalent to increasing mesh size by 10mm. A codend made of 8mm single twine has similar selectivity to that made of 5mm double twine.

As a result of this research, legislation was introduced, initially by UK and then EU authorities, to limit the thickness of twines. It is not possible, however, to isolate the effect on stocks of this one measure limiting twine thickness as many other changes have been made to gear designs during the same period.

Mathematical models of codend geometry have shown that stiffer twine limits the expansion of the codend as the catch builds up and hence limits the openness of the codend meshes in the area where the majority of fish escape.

Nets made of lightweight, high strength twines will have lower drag for a given size. This will allow a fisherman either *(a)* to reduce his fuel bill and maintain the same catch or *(b)* to tow faster (with the same fuel bill) and possibly increase his catch per unit time or *(c)* to buy a larger net to increase catch at the same towing speed.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what trials have been carried out in British waters of the Icelandic Ex-It cod excluder device. [150312]

Mr. Bradshaw: As far as is known, no trials with the Icelandic Ex-It excluder device have been carried out by any UK government departments or agencies.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people seconded to her Department from outside organisations are helping to draft Answers to honourable Members' *(a)* oral and *(b)* written Parliamentary Questions. [153913]

Alun Michael: Defra's Ministers see secondment and interchange as a key means of complementing the skills and experience of the civil service, drawing in expertise from such fields as business, local government and the voluntary sector as well as other Government Departments. This is assisting Defra's commitment to playing its part in developing a modern, flexible, outward looking Civil Service that works in partnership with all sectors of society. Interchange is seen as a key tool in meeting this commitment. Defra continues to promote and encourage the interchange of personnel between the Department and a range of other organisations.

The term "secondee" is used within the civil service in a more limited sense than the meaning used outside the civil service. In the civil service a secondee is a person "borrowed" from an organisation outside the Civil Service for a period of between three months, and three years (exceptionally five years), without affecting employment status. During the secondment period the secondee would remain an employee of the parent organisation but would be expected to abide by the Defra Staff handbook and the Official Secrets Act 1989. At the end of the secondment the secondee would return to the parent organisation.

Defra currently has 41 secondees from outside organisations. All are at Higher Executive Office grade and above. The secondees are appointed on the basis of the match of competencies and skills required for the post and in the case of the 41 formal secondees from outside organisations in Defra at present this may include drafting answers to PQ's. Although some details of the secondee and the parent organisation are held centrally, duties undertaken on a day to day basis would be a matter for their managers and are not centrally recorded. Detailed information could not be obtained without incurring disproportionate costs.

Rural Payments Agency

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what value of payments *(a)* have been made and *(b)* remain unpaid from the Rural Payments Agency to Welsh farmers, broken down by (i) constituency and (ii) local authority area for each year since the scheme began. [151726]

Alun Michael: The following figures relate to payments made to Welsh farmers under the schemes administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), since its creation on 16 October 2001. The information has been provided by county, as breaking down the data by constituency and local authority area could be achieved only at disproportionate cost.

Slaughter Premium Scheme (SPS)

County	*Amount paid (£)*	*Claims paid*	*Amount unpaid (£)*	*Claims unpaid*
SPS 2001 scheme year				
Powys	949,142.78	4,067	1,966.90	133
Gwynedd	1,145,295.95	3,400	0	1
Dyfed	2,170,937.55	7,932	7,702.28	30
Clwyd	1,089,531.08	3,798	0	47
South Glamorgan	189,144.07	517	0	1
Mid Glamorgan	101,975.55	428	0	0
West Glamorgan	127,252.07	442	0	0
Gwent	347,648.32	1,220	68.98	2
Total	6,120,927.37	21,804	9,738.16	214
SPS 2002 scheme year				
Powys	1,936,838.88	4,530	16,421.97	199
Gwynedd	1,902,937.06	3,211	2,309.23	170
Dyfed	4,111,194.14	8,152	10,058.93	320
Clwyd	1,863,821.23	3,422	16,700.55	131
South Glamorgan	286,707.70	441	134.54	9
Mid Glamorgan	202,331.81	437	288.30	15
West Glamorgan	229,556.44	416	809.64	16
Gwent	654,392.94	1,253	7,343.73	63
Total	11,187,780.20	21,862	54,066.89	923

Slaughter Premium Scheme (SPS)

County	*Amount paid (£)*	*Claims paid*	*Amount unpaid (£)*	*Claims unpaid*
SPS 2003 scheme year				
Powys	814,884.68	2,872	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown
Gwynedd	532,338.62	1,739	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown
Dyfed	1,631,216.48	5,082	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown
Clwyd	886,446.12	2,092	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown
South Glamorgan	160,487.66	278	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown
Mid Glamorgan	73,947.73	230	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown
West Glamorgan	88,914.76	234	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown
Gwent	282,670.33	789	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown
Total	4,470,906.38	13,316	[1]Unknown	[1]Unknown

[1] 2003 scheme year still on-going figures as at January 2004

Over Thirty Months Scheme (OTMS)

County	*Amount paid (£)*	*Claims Paid*	*Amount unpaid (£)* [1]	*Claims unpaid*
OTMS payments 16 October 2001 to 31 December 2001				
Powys	843,391.22	2,828	12,000	32
Gwynedd	775,822.93	2,655	9,000	24
Dyfed	4,419,479.41	14,970	34,875	93
Clwyd	1,079,744.08	3,633	10,125	27
South Glamorgan	146,974.88	478	750	2
Mid Glamorgan	119,429.71	410	0	0
West Glamorgan	135,249.99	472	1,500	4
Gwent	570,685.83	1,868	3,750	10
Total	8,090,778.05	27,314	72,000	192
OTMS payments 2002				
Powys	3,717,572.46	12,422	37,875	101
Gwynedd	2,773,056.53	9,439	31,875	85
Dyfed	13,436,464.53	45,786	96,000	256
Clwyd	4,291,106.78	14,399	44,250	118
South Glamorgan	434,365.31	1,378	3,750	10
Mid Glamorgan	458,556.67	1,527	3,000	8
West Glamorgan	433,968.41	1,497	9,750	26
Gwent	1,718,300.68	5,753	16,500	44
Total	27,263,391.37	92,201	243,000	648
OTMS payments 2003				
Powys	3,491,120.13	12,151	35,250	94
Gwynedd	2,281,981.75	8,155	37,125	99
Dyfed	10,753,321.43	38,393	141,000	376
Clwyd	3,867,087.60	13,434	42,750	114
South Glamorgan	338,412.43	1,127	1,500	4
Mid Glamorgan	341,557.64	1,160	3,375	9
West Glamorgan	296,161.28	1,076	5,625	15
Gwent	14,531,26.91	5,103	29,250	78
Total	22,822,769.17	80,599	295,875	789

[1] The Rural Payments Agency's OTMS payment system does not calculate animal values until they are eligible for the scheme. The figures for unpaid animals have been calculated using an average payment of £350 each.

Livestock Welfare (Disposal) Scheme (LW(D)S)

This scheme has since been discontinued and there are no outstanding payments to be made to any Welsh farmers.

County	*Amount paid (£)*	*Claims paid*
LW(D)S payments 16 October 2001 to 31 December 2001		
Powys	3,223,518.38	1,889
Gwynedd	818,603.48	799
Dyfed	1,542,907.28	810
Clwyd	624,018.76	421
South Glamorgan	77,391.02	5
Mid Glamorgan	271,002	175
West Glamorgan	172,199.04	81
Gwent	327,034.63	193
Total	7,056,674.59	4,373
LW(D)S payments 2002		
Powys	83,615.19	135
Gwynedd	113,093.69	105
Dyfed	68,914.98	67
Clwyd	172,903.61	66
South Glamorgan	1,100	2
Mid Glamorgan	34,370.78	29
Total	473,998.25	404

LW(D)S Slaughter Premium Scheme (SPS) top up payments

County	*Amount paid (£)*	*Claims paid*
Powys	418,597	1,658
Gwynedd	68,085	432
Dyfed	283,481	680
Clwyd	132,118	337
South Glamorgan	6,301	7
Mid Glamorgan	16,553	39
West Glamorgan	24,591	40
Gwent	85,763	99
Total	1,035,489	3,292

The Agrimonetary Scheme—16 October 2001 to April 2002

County	*Amount paid (£)*	*Number entitled*
Clwyd	97,793.70	543
Dyfed	313,785.30	1,976
Gwent	43,708.64	221
Gwynedd	32,048.30	265
Mid Glamorgan	7,231.90	43
Powys	50,077.70	338
South Glamorgan	11,362.02	63
West Glamorgan	5,516.54	54
Grand total	561,524.10	3,503

This scheme for dairy farmers was introduced with the intention of offsetting the reduction in prices received by UK dairy farmers resulting from currency fluctuations during 1999 and 2000.

There are no outstanding payments for this scheme.

The RPA made these payments from October 2001 to April 2002.

Sudden Oak Death

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has evaluated on whether spores of sudden oak death are carried by *(a)* the air, *(b)* water and *(c)* human movement. [149263]

Mr. Bradshaw: The disease "Phytophthora ramorum" (or Sudden Oak Death) was described as a new species in October 2001. As it was a new species very little was known about the disease and no research had been conducted which could be evaluated to determine how the spores are dispersed.

From June 2002 Defra and the Forestry Commission have commissioned research to investigate the biology of the disease including how spores of this organism are spread. The research programme is on-going. However, preliminary investigations have detected spores in water, soil and leaf litter but not so far in air. More intensive air sampling is planned for the spring when conditions are more conducive for spore production. The possibility of dispersal via wind blown mists cannot be ruled out. Studies are also assessing the role of vertebrates in spreading the pathogen. If humans or animals come into contact with infected soil/debris or other contaminated material it is possible that they could spread spores of the disease but it is unclear how significant such dispersal would be in establishing new infections. Defra and FC scientists are also keeping in close contact with colleagues in the USA who are investigating this disease.

Swill

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are in place to enforce the ban on feeding swill to pigs on farms and smallholdings. [152255]

Mr. Bradshaw: Following the introduction of the ban that was introduced in May 2001 the State Veterinary Service made a series of visits to all former swill feeders to ensure compliance was achieved. It is now Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 which prohibits the feeding of catering waste to farmed animals and the enforcement powers laid down in the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003 are exercised by the local authorities. The Chief Veterinary Officer, however, continues to ensure that local authorities and the State Veterinary Service are reminded of the importance of remaining vigilant on compliance during all visits and inspections.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she will take to prevent wild birds feeding at landfill sites containing disposed swill, in relation to the prevention of the spread of disease to livestock. [152256]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra and the Environment Agency have reminded operators of landfill sites of the animal health risks from waste food and of their obligations to ensure precautionary measures are taken to help prevent scavenging by wildlife. These include prompt burial with progressive covering with non food waste to ensure waste food is not left exposed, and robust vermin and pest control measures.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of farms and smallholdings which may still be feeding unprocessed swill to pigs. [152257]

Mr. Bradshaw: It has long been illegal to feed unprocessed swill and since May 2001 it has also been illegal to feed processed swill. There should therefore be no farms or smallholdings feeding such material to pigs.

TRANSPORT

Aircraft Safety

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what special safety inspections are made, and with what regularity, on the aircraft of airlines that are allowed to use UK airports but are banned on safety grounds from using some other European airports; [153666]

(2) what his policy is on data sharing on aircraft safety with other European countries; and what his policy is on the proposed EU Directive on this. [153686]

Mr. McNulty: The Government have consistently supported data sharing arrangements established under the European Civil Aviation Conference's Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft (SAFA) programme. The reports of all inspections of foreign aircraft carried out under the programme are entered on a central database and may be accessed by all participating states. We also support the proposed EC Directive on the safety of third-country aircraft using Community airports, which is based on the SAFA programme.

My answer to the hon. Member for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (John Thurso) on 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 546W, explains why the SAFA database cannot be used to determine whether an airline currently has restrictions on its operations to an ECAC State. The database only contains details of aircraft inspections and immediate corrective action. In most cases such action relates to the specific aircraft inspected and the airline would be free to operate flights using other aircraft. Moreover many restrictions last for only a few days while the issue identified is addressed.

The record of inspections on an airline's aircraft by other states is taken into account in determining our own programme of inspections.

The SAFA programme is under constant review and we are working with our European colleagues to extend and refine the information on the database.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what safety inspections are undertaken on aircraft flying from the UK which are owned by airlines that are banned on safety grounds from landing in certain other European countries. [154216]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to my answer given to him today (ref 153666, 153686).

Commercial Vehicles

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received on *(a)* overnight parking facilities for commercial vehicles and *(b)* dedicated rest areas. [150217]

Mr. Jamieson: Two representations have been received on these matters since July last year.

Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the resources which agencies within the Driver, Vehicle and Operator group will require from 2003–04 to 2006–07 to carry out vehicle enforcement responsibilities previously carried out by police forces in England and Wales; from which sources the extra resources will come; and if he will make a statement. [153204]

Mr. Jamieson: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency is progressively taking over the role from the Police of stopping vehicles, in order to carry out roadside compliance checks using its own staff and vehicles. The estimated costs are £1.7 million per annum. The Department is providing finance for the setting up period but, in the long run, this activity will be funded through fees.

Edinburgh Airport

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1006W, on Edinburgh airport, if he will place in the Library a list of addresses for the 33 households. [154168]

Mr. McNulty: The figure of 33 residential properties that would need to be taken if a new close parallel runway were to be built at Edinburgh airport comes from a map based appraisal analysis designed to enable comparison of options. This exercise was not designed to be a highly detailed or final assessment of specific options. Individual addresses were not therefore recorded as part of it.

The Air Transport White Paper called for the preparation of the airport masterplans. The masterplan for Edinburgh airport will be incorporated into the strategic planning framework for West Edinburgh and future local development plan revisions. This will enable a more definitive view to be taken of exactly which properties will be affected when future planning applications are made. This will in turn allow the owners of those properties which may be affected to seek redress under the terms of the non-statutory scheme for Edinburgh which BAA are currently considering.

Graffiti

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps he is taking to ensure that *(a)* Network Rail and *(b)* rail operators protect their (i) stations, (ii) tracks and (iii) rolling stock from graffiti; [153614]

(2) if he will co-ordinate a programme of cleaning graffiti from tracks, stations and rolling stock. [153615]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail has responsibility for ownership and maintenance of the national rail network infrastructure, including the removal of graffiti. In 2003–04, £2.5million was allocated in Network Rail's Safety and Environment Plan to tackle environmental issues like graffiti, rising to £3.5million in 2004–05. Network Rail is also taking forward a number of partnership projects with local authorities in different regions to enable graffiti removal from roadside parapets and walls of Network Rail-owned bridges.

Train operating companies (TOCs) have responsibility for removing and preventing graffiti on those railway stations that are leased to them and on their rolling stock. The SRA's new franchising agreements contain key performance indicators in the areas of station security and the on-train environment. This further incentivises the prevention and removal of graffiti by train operating companies by tying the issue of cleanliness firmly to their profits. The SRA also encourages all train operating companies to seek accreditation under the Secure Stations and Secured Car Park award schemes. Such schemes have proven their value in reducing all types of crime, including the prevention of graffiti.

The Home Office's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit is taking forward a national action plan—'Operation Scrub-It'—aimed at developing initiatives to tackle graffiti. This is being taken forward in partnership with the British Transport Police, Crime Stoppers, Network Rail, London Underground and other transport providers.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of international trends in the use of liquefied petroleum gas for road vehicles; and if he will make a statement. [153672]

Mr. Jamieson: There is limited information on international trends in the use of LPG for road vehicles. There were an estimated 107,000 LPG vehicles in the UK in 2003. In contrast, there are estimated to be over one million LPG vehicles in Italy which has the largest European market.

The European Commission Alternative Fuels contact Group recently presented their report on The Market Development of Alternative Fuels. The report argued that a combination of alternative fuels had the potential to achieve a 20 per cent. market share by 2020 and identified LPG as having the scope to achieve a 5 per cent. market share by 2010.

Globally, significant markets for LPG also exist in South Korea, Japan, Australia and North America.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people are employed in the UK in the road vehicle liquefied petroleum gas industry. [153673]

Mr. Jamieson: The latest estimate of the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association is that there are 2,500 people employed in the industry in the UK.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles in the UK have been converted to run on liquefied petroleum gas; and how many have been converted with the aid of a PowerShift grant. [153674]

Mr. Jamieson: According to the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association, approximately 107,000 vehicles had been converted to run on LPG by the end of 2003.

Since 1997, 17,383 vehicles have been converted to run on LPG with the aid of a Powershift grant.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Chancellor about the impact of fuel taxation measures on *(a)* liquefied petroleum gas conversions, *(b)* environmental damage and *(c)* public health. [153675]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government issued a joint DfT/HMT/HMCE consultation document in June 2003, which sought views on the future structure of the Government's support for road fuel gases and natural gas in the short to medium term. The consultation is available on the DfT website. The consultation summarised the growth of the LPG sector incentivised by fuel duty differentials, reduced vehicle excise duty and the availability of grants under the Transport Energy programmes. Further, the consultation made an illustrative comparison of the environmental performance of LPG vehicles in comparison with conventionally fuelled vehicles.

The Government are currently considering the responses to this consultation and will announce their decisions in Budget 2004.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many re-fuelling sites are available in the UK for *(a)* liquefied petroleum gas and *(b)* compressed natural gas. [153670]

Mr. Jamieson: According to the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association and the Natural Gas Vehicle Association, there are approximately 1,300 LPG re-fuelling sites in and 18 compressed natural gas re-fuelling sites in the UK.

M5

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the cost of upgrading Junction 10 of the M5 to allow northbound and southbound traffic to join and leave the motorway. [153783]

Mr. Jamieson: The cost of upgrading Junction 10 of the M5 to a full movement junction would be in the region of £15 to £30 million at current prices, depending on the design and the cost of land required.

Motorways

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what works are being carried out adjacent to the southbound carriageway of the M1 motorway between junctions 14 and 13 in Buckinghamshire which relate to alleviating motorway noise; when this work was authorised; and what estimate he has made of the cost. [153248]

Dr. Howells: These noise mitigation works are being constructed outside of the highway boundary by a private landowner and are not publicly funded.

Planning consent for a 6 metre high, 150 metre long screening bund was granted by Milton Keynes Council in May 2003.

Rail Freight

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rail freight miles were travelled in each year since 2003; and if he will make a statement. [150011]

Mr. McNulty: Rail freight moved in Great Britain is published by the Strategic Rail Authority each quarter in "National Rail Trends". In 2002-03, rail freight moved was 18.7 billion tonne-kilometres.

Road Accidents

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* serious injuries there have been on the (i) A12, (ii) A134, (iii) A120 west of Colchester, (iv) A120 east of Colchester, (v) A137 and (vi) A133 in Essex in the past 12 months. [152079]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Casualties from Road Accidents: 2002[1]

	Fatal	*Serious*
A12	15	125
A133	2	21
A134	4	24
A137	2	16
A120[2]	4	6
A120[3]	4	29

[1] Last full year for which figures are available

[2] East of Colchester

[3] West of Colchester

Road Improvement Projects

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate real terms cost inflation for road improvement projects for each year since 1997. [153782]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) monitors prices for new road construction and publishes indices. The DTI's Road Construction Tender Price Index (RCTPI and also known as the ROADCON Index) is based on priced rates contained in accepted tenders for road construction, motorway widening and major maintenance schemes costing over £0.25 million obtained from the Highways Agency and local

authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. The indices are published every quarter and the first two columns of the table are abstracted from the latest available ROADCON Index figures (December 2003). The third column has been calculated for this answer.

	ROADCON Index	*Year on year "inflation rate" (in ROADCON Index terms) since 1997*
1997	100	—
1998	99	−1.0
1999	100	+1.0
2000	114	+14.0
2001	117	+2.6
2002	121	+3.4
2003	[1]122	+0.8

[1] The figure for the year 2003 is an interim figure as (i) the year is not yet complete (the last quarter is January to March 2004), and (ii) the indices for the last two published quarters are provisional and subject to adjustment (when delayed data are received by DTI).

Roadworks (A1)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) for what reasons advance warning was not given of the closure of the exit from the A1 at Newark to the A17 and A46; [153243]

(2) for what reasons 24-hour working is not taking place on the southbound carriageway of the A1 near Newark; [153244]

(3) for what reasons and for how long the junction between the A1, A17 and A46 at Newark will be closed; and for what reasons the exit from the A1 at this point is closed; [153245]

(4) for how long he expects the southbound carriageway of the A1 to be closed at Newark. [153246]

Dr. Howells: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Highways Agency, Archie Robertson to write to the right hon. Member.

Letter from Archie Robertson to Mr. Greg Knight, dated 11 February 2004:

I have been asked by the Transport Minister, Kim Howells, to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about road closures as a result of work being carried out on the A1 Trunk Road at Newark.

The major resurfacing scheme on both carriageways of the A1 at Newark is taking place on a heavily trafficked section of road, which includes a busy interchange (with A46/A17) and is situated close to built-up areas. As such, the work is inevitably subject to certain constraints.

There are two sets of warning signs informing drivers of the closure of the slip roads at Newark, on both the north and southbound carriageways of the A1, together with signs to follow the appropriate diversion routes. Advance signs are also situated on all approach roads to the slip roads, again with diversion signs in place giving instructions on how to access the A1. Additional signs, over and above those required to meet statutory requirements, were erected on the diversion routes on 16 January to give greater clarity for users of the diversions.

In order to maintain traffic flow, both north and southbound, contraflow working is being used. For safety reasons, and to allow a smooth flow of traffic through the contraflow lengths, the slip roads to the A46/A17 need to be closed. Some resurfacing is also being carried out on the slip roads themselves. Although the southbound carriageway was reopened on 1 February, it is now subject to contraflow working whilst the northbound carriageway is dealt with.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to undertake this work on a 24-hour basis due to the close proximity of residential property. For environmental reasons Newark and Sherwood District Council have placed restrictions on working after 10pm so that local people do not suffer undue noise nuisance overnight.

I am pleased to say that good progress is being made with the resurfacing and all work is on target to be completed by the 16 March. The Agency regrets any disruption that these essential maintenance works may have caused. Wherever possible, we do try to keep this to a minimum and give advance publicity locally. I note, from these and previous questions you have asked, that you frequently use the north—south route, either via the A1 or M1.

If you would like any further information the Agency's Route Manager, Graham Littlechild, will be more than happy to assist you. Please let him know if you would like to be included on a circulation list for advance publicity when works of this kind are proposed on these routes in the future. He can be contacted at our offices at Broadway, Broad Street, Birmingham B15 1BL, or by telephone on 0121 678 8034.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras there were in Wales in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* police force, *(b)* constituency, *(c)* safety camera partnership and *(d)* local authority area. [151748]

Mr. Jamieson: We do not hold information centrally for camera operations other than those operated within the Safety Camera Partnerships. The figures from the South and Central Wales safety camera partnership, which joined the scheme from April 2000 and the North Wales partnership, which joined the scheme in October 2001, are as follows.

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
North Wales [1]	[2]—	28	45	66
South and Central Wales [3]	33	80	313	357

[1] Covers the North Wales police authority area

[2] Prior to joining the safety camera programme

[3] In 2000–01 and 2001–02, covered the South Wales police authority area; from 2002/03, joined by Gwent and Dyfed and Powys police force areas

Notes:

1. For 2003–04 the number of sites shown are those approved in the operational cases for 2003–04, not all of which may yet be operational.
2. These figures exclude red traffic-light cameras.
3. Police authorities also have operational discretion to deploy cameras exceptionally at other locations, including "community concern sites", where there is evidence of speeding causing concern to local residents.

We do not record this information specifically by police force, constituency or local authority area.

Uninsured Vehicles

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were killed or seriously injured in accidents involving uninsured cars in the last year for which figures are available. [153939]

Mr. Jamieson: Information on the number of people killed or seriously injured in accidents involving uninsured vehicles is not held by my Department.

Data on accidents collected centrally in the Home Office do not identify the circumstances surrounding the offence.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the average additional cost to car insurance premiums resulting from damage from uninsured vehicles involved in accidents. [154101]

Mr. Jamieson: The Motor Insurers' Bureau estimates that the average cost to each motorist's insurance premium as a result of uninsured drivers involved in accidents is between £15 and £30.

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his policy on *(a)* the provision of loans and grants to the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency and *(b)* the maximum annual percentage uplift by which the agency may increase its fees and charges. [153203]

Mr. Jamieson: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), as a Trading Fund, may receive loans or grants to accomplish its objectives that are agreed with the Department. Fees and charges are set periodically, based on the costs and commitments in undertaking functions.

There is no maximum ceiling for the VOSA's annual fee increases, but all proposals are subject to a thorough series of consultations and submissions both with the Driver, Vehicle and Operator group, the Department for Transport, Ministers and the Trade before any increase in fee levels is agreed. Ministers have to approve all fee increases to be included in Statutory Instruments (SI) and have to sign SIs prior to them being presented to Parliament.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of *(a)* the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency's contribution to the improvement of road safety and environmental standards and *(b)* failure rates on checks and tests of (i) heavy goods vehicles, (ii) public service vehicles and (iii) light goods vehicles reported in the Vehicle Inspectorate's Effectiveness Report for 2002–03; and what targets he has set for these checks and tests for 2003–04 to 2005–06. [153205]

Mr. Jamieson: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency's contribution to road safety and environmental standards is made through its range of licensing, testing (including emissions testing), enforcement, education and training services, and through its supervision of MOT testing. Fleet compliance checks are carried out regularly to assess the base-line condition of vehicles and to compare them against our targeted checks. Failure rates at annual test for heavy goods vehicles, public service vehicles and light goods vehicles remain unsatisfactory. Slightly higher fail rates for heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles in 2002–03 over previous years is mainly due to a new item in the test.

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency is increasingly targeting bad practice among operators and owners of vehicles through improved knowledge and intelligence systems. The responsibility for test failure rates lies with operators and owners, and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency has not been set specific targets. The Agency has been set effectiveness improvement objectives for its enforcement activities during 2003–04. Enforcement effectiveness is measured by Performance Gain points, and the Agency is to achieve at least a 2 per cent. improvement across all its activities, including for enforcement of HGV and PSV roadworthiness and environmental standards. No objectives have yet been set for enforcement effectiveness in 2004–05 or 2005–06.

Performance Gain is an agreed indicator of the outcome value in road safety compliance terms of each of VOSA's specific enforcement activities and has been operating for several years during which annual performance objectives have been met.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures are in place to ensure that the owners of untaxed illegal foreign cars are traced and brought into the United Kingdom car tax regime; and if he will make a statement. [153431]

Mr. Jamieson: A vehicle which is registered and taxed in its home country may be used by a visitor to Great Britain for up to six months in 12 without being subject to domestic requirements. To qualify for this exemption the visitor must have their normal residence outside GB.

If at any time a vehicle being used in Great Britain on foreign plates is stopped by the police, it is the responsibility of the keeper to demonstrate that they are eligible to use the vehicle without licensing and registering it here. If they are not eligible, enforcement action will be taken.

DEFENCE

Apache Helicopters

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when he expects the training facilities for Apache helicopter pilots to be available; [153973]

(2) for what reasons training equipment is not available to train Apache helicopter pilots; [153975]

(3) when he expects there to be sufficient trained helicopter pilots available to enable the helicopters at RAF Shawbury to be put into front line service. [153976]

Mr. Ingram: Training facilities for Apache helicopter pilots are already available and being utilised. The Army expects to achieve Initial Operating Capability in August 2004 and a task force capability based on nine Regiment Army Air Corps during spring 2005. The numbers of aircraft in storage will diminish progressively from mid 2004 through to autumn 2005.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed,

(d) prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what amounts were involved in each case. [153208]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence does not hold this information.

Civil Contingency Reaction Force

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Civil Contingency Reaction Forces (CCRF) reservists are allocated to each of the regional CCRF units; and if he will make a statement; [153282]

(2) how many training days members of Civil Contingency Reaction Forces undergo; what is covered at each training day; and if he will make a statement. [153283]

Mr. Ingram: 500 Civil Contingency Reaction Force (CCRF) reservists are allocated to each of the 14 regional CCRF units. Members of the CCRF receive five days training per year, in addition to their normal reservist training. The additional days are used to ensure familiarisation and integration with the local authorities and the emergency services. They also ensure that the procedures for mobilisation are well practised. This is achieved through practical exercises and study periods and is completed in the context of the normal training regime, which covers areas such as First Aid, Fitness, Nuclear Biological and Chemical drills, map reading and communications.

SDR (Consultation Document)

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the individuals and organisations to whom *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its executive agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultation document, A New Chapter to the Strategic Defence Review: the role of the reserves in home defence and security. [153851]

Mr. Ingram: The consultation document "A new chapter to the strategic defence review: the role of the reserves in home defence and security" was distributed by the Ministry of Defence in June 2002, with a consultation period of three months.

It is not possible or practicable to list every individual who received a copy of this document. However, I can confirm that the following organisations or groups of people were sent a copy:

The Chairman and Members of the House of Commons Defence Committee

Opposition Defence Spokesmen

Selected Government Departments

Ex-Chiefs of the Defence Staff

The Local Government Association

Local Government Chief Executives

Emergency Planning Society

Scottish Executive

Northern Ireland Executive

Welsh Assembly

Libraries of both Houses

Media (selected broadcast, print and specialist media)

A limited number of copies were also made available to the regular and reserve forces. However, the primary means of consultation for both the internal and external audience was through the MOD website, which carried a dedicated area for the consultation document.

Decommissioning

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the planned decommissioning dates are for *(a)* HMS Vanguard, *(b)* HMS Victorious, *(c)* HMS Vigilant and *(d)* HMS Vengeance; [154104]

(2) what the *(a)* maximum and *(b)* planned lifespans are for the UK Trident missile system; [154105]

(3) when he expects to make a decision on replacing the strategic nuclear deterrent with a new system; and what the latest date is by which this decision must be made. [154107]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 20 February 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 3.11 of the Defence White Paper published in December 2003 (CM 6041).

As with other key defence capabilities, we routinely undertake studies into the optimum operational life and value for money rather than specifying a fixed lifespan.

Helicopter-borne Forces

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to what use the additional investment to reduce the response times of helicopter-borne forces to deal with renegade shipping has been put; and if he will make a statement. [154276]

Mr. Ingram: In accordance with the SDR New Chapter, a programme of enhancements to the Ministry of Defence's support for Maritime Counter Terrorism has been introduced. This will allow MOD to continue to provide support to the civil authorities in response to this threat. The programme includes enhancements to equipment and the training of additional aircraft crews and engineers.

HMS Roebuck

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the ability of HMS Roebuck to remain fully operational until its planned decommissioning in 2014. [154280]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Roebuck is planned to begin a ship life extension programme in September 2004. The programme will cover mechanical systems, hull structures, habitability, in-service support and the updating of her survey capability, including a new multibeam echo sounder. It will extend her life until around 2014.

Human Rights Violations

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to the question from the hon. Member for East Carmarthen and Dinefwr of 2 December 2003, on human rights violations, reference 141740. [154478]

Mr. Ingram: I replied to the hon. Member on 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1104W.

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect of British cluster bombs on (i) Iraqi armed forces during the conflict and (ii) civilians since large-scale hostilities ceased; and if he will make a statement. [147326]

Mr. Ingram: We evaluate the performance and effects of all our equipment following the conclusion of every military operation involving UK Forces. The department's 'First Reflections' report included a brief summary and our initial assessment of the effect of cluster bombs during major combat operations in Iraq. Cluster bombs were used by UK forces against dispersed Iraqi military forces in the open or on the periphery of built up areas where they played an important role. Had cluster bombs not been used in this way more powerful and more destructive munitions would have been needed.

The UK takes seriously its obligations as a member of the coalition to provide a safe, secure and risk free environment for the Iraqi people. Since the end of major combat operations 675,000 munitions have been cleared in the UK area of responsibility. We do not record individual types of munitions cleared.

Jan Willem Matser

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reports he has received about the case of former NATO employee Jan Willem Matser convicted of forgery and fraud in the Netherlands; what discussions he has had with the NATO Secretary General on the implications of the case; and if he will make a statement. [154454]

Mr. Ingram: I have not received any official reports regarding this case, nor have I raised the matter with the NATO Secretary General.

Procurement

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to instruct the *(a)* Defence Procurement Agency and *(b)* Defence Logistics Organisation to make an annual report on their work, to include the total amount in bid costs refunded to contractors in respect of procurement competitions being (i) terminated and (ii) substantially altered. [153512]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for replacement oilers for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. [146509]

Mr. Ingram: The Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) programme is intended to provide the Royal Navy with a significant element of its future afloat support requirements as the current capability provided by the RFA fleet is progressively withdrawn from service. This will include the replenishment at sea of bulk consumables such as fuel oil, lubricants, water, stores, ammunition, and food. MARS is currently reaching the end of its concept phase prior to the start of its Assessment Phase during which the project team will work with industry to establish how best to deliver this capability. As MARS comes into service, it will progressively replace those existing oilers due on current plans to be withdrawn from service over the next decade with the exception of the two new Wave Class Auxiliary Oilers which came into service in 2003.

Sea King Helicopters

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 505W, to the hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler), on Sea King helicopters, whether the helicopters in the collision were equipped with accident data recorders. [154503]

Mr. Ingram: No. The only Royal Navy helicopters fitted with accident data recording equipment are some of the Merlin Fleet.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) pursuant to his answer of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 505W, to the hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler), on Sea King helicopters, what assessment he has made of the need for fleet-wide night vision capability since the collision; [154505]

(2) what assessment he has made of whether senior officers are satisfied that there was no malfunction of equipment during the exercise; [154494]

(3) what *(a)* lights and *(b)* equipment were not permitted for use on this occasion that are permitted in normal night-time flying conditions; [154500]

(4) what experience the crews of the two helicopters had had of flying in these conditions in respect of *(a)* use of radar, *(b)* use of radio, *(c)* lighting, *(d)* restricted vision and *(e)* restricted flight path; [154493]

(5) whether the crews of each helicopter had radio communications with Mission Control on board HMS Ark Royal; [154497]

(6) what recommendations from the Board of Inquiry report have been acted upon by his Department; [154507]

(7) whether the crews of each helicopter had a radar surveillance and advice warning from Mission Control on board HMS Ark Royal; [154496]

(8) what assessment of rules and procedures for night flying senior commanders *(a)* had made before the mission and *(b)* have made since the mission; [154504]

(9) whether both Sea Kings had been permitted radio contact with *(a)* each other and *(b)* HMS Ark Royal throughout the exercise; [154495]

(10) what other helicopters were operating in the area; [154491]

(11) how many sorties each helicopter had completed before the accident; and whether they had reported difficulty with *(a)* flying conditions, *(b)* restricted vision, *(c)* restricted flight path and *(d)* malfunction of equipment. [154492]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member with the information he has requested, and a copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 505W, to the hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler), on Sea King helicopters, when the Royal Navy Flight Safety and Accident Investigation Centre will publish its report on the accident. [154506]

Mr. Ingram: The accident investigation into the loss of the Sea King helicopters from HMS Ark Royal will take at least another six months. A copy of the resulting accident summary will be placed in the Library of the House.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's definition is of a weapon of mass destruction. [154249]

Mr. Hoon: As the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my hon. Friend for North Warwickshire (Mr. O'Brien), said on 28 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 769W, there is no universally accepted definition of the phrase "weapons of mass destruction", but it is generally held to refer to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Motoring Offences

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Solicitor-General in how many cases in the last five years initial charges of causing death by dangerous driving have been reduced to the charge of careless driving. [154332]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) holds no central records on particular charges, or on the amendments made to charges.

This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Sir Roy Meadow

Tim Loughton: To ask the Solicitor-General on what occasions Sir Roy Meadow has given lectures to judges and other court officials on the subject of infanticide and harm of children at the hands of their parents. [151029]

The Solicitor-General: Details of the lectures given by Sir Roy Meadow at seminars organised by the Judicial Studies Board appear in the following table.

Seminar	*Lecture*	*Date*
Seminar for Potential Nominated Care Judges	The Paediatric Witness	7–9 May 1997
Seminar for Potential Nominated Care Judges	The Paediatric Witness	6–8 May 1998
Seminar for Potential Nominated Care Judges	The Paediatric Witness	5–7 May 1999
Seminar for Potential Nominated Care Judges	The Paediatric Witness	9–12 May 2000
Continuation Seminar for Nominated Care District Judges	Paediatric Reports	22–24 May 2000
Seminar for Potential Nominated Care Judges	The Paediatric Witness	1–4 May 2001

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff in her Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what amounts were involved in each case. [153868]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has had no reported cases of staff involved in benefit fraud in the last six years.

Digital Broadcasting

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the criteria are by which the sequence by region of digital switchover will take place; and if she will make a statement. [154174]

Estelle Morris: Digital switchover will be a phased process, with different regions switching at different times. Part of the work of the Digital Television Action Plan is to agree the order in which different regions are switched. The reports from the BBC and Ofcom and the Digital Television Consumer Expert Group expected at the end of March, will help inform our considerations.

Graffiti

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what initiatives her Department has undertaken to encourage communities to become involved in graffiti prevention. [153823]

Estelle Morris: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport works with other Government Departments and agencies, including the Home Office and Youth Justice Board, to deliver initiatives that seek to reduce antisocial behaviour, such as graffiti, by offering developmental sports and arts activities as an alternative. These include:

Positive Futures:

We are key partners in this national sports, based social inclusion programme targeted at marginalised 10 to 19-year-olds in the most deprived areas. It aims to build relationships between responsible adults and young people based on mutual trust and respect in order to create new opportunities for alternative lifestyles.

Positive Activities for Young People:

We are one of a number of Government Departments and agencies that work together to deliver Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP). PAYP is a three year cross Government and Lottery funded school holiday activity programme that aims to reduce street crime, build community cohesion and encourage children and young people to return to education or

training by engaging them in high quality sport and art activities. It is targeted at young people most at risk of truancy or offending and areas with high levels of street crime or community cohesion problems.

Historic Buildings (Gift Aid Relief)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with charity owners of historic buildings on the impact of the changes to gift aid relief against admission ticket revenues announced in the Pre-Budget Report. [154402]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS officials have been talking to Inland Revenue colleagues and representatives of a variety of associations and representative bodies about the implementation of changes to the Gift Aid Scheme announced in the pre-Budget report with a view to ensuring that the changes do not cause unnecessary problems for the charities affected.

Licensing Act

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the administrative costs to *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* individual licensees and *(c)* central government of the changes to the licensing regime resulting from the Licensing Act 2002; and if she will make a statement. [154061]

Mr. Caborn: Proposed fee levels and the expected costs of compliance with the 2003 Act were set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment which accompanied the Licensing Bill and is available from the House Library. Regulations setting out the fees to accompany applications for licences, club premises certificates and other applications will be laid before Parliament shortly, showing the cost to individual licensees and applicants.

The Department is working closely with the Local Government Association to produce licensing fees which are set at a level to provide for full cost recovery in respect of administration, inspection and enforcement. In those cases where the Department has announced that there will be an exemption from the payment of fees in certain circumstances the costs will be met by central government.

Lottery Funding

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many applications for Lottery grant funding have been received in the last year from Cunninghame, South; what the total value was of these applications; and how many of these applications were successful. [153215]

Estelle Morris: This Department has never collected comprehensive information on either the number or value of applications for Lottery grants received by the Distributing Bodies.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many applications were made for Heritage Lottery funding in *(a)* Trafford and *(b)* Altrincham and Sale, West in each of the last five years. [153221]

Estelle Morris: The number of applications that were made for Heritage Lottery Funding in *(a)* Trafford and *(b)* Altrincham and Sale, West in each of the last five years were:

Financial year	*Trafford*	*Altrincham and Sale West*
1997–98	4	3
1998–99	1	0
1999–2000	1	0
2000–01	1	1
2001–02	1	1
2002–03	2	1

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Heritage Lottery funding has been awarded in the Altrincham and Sale, West constituency in each of the last five years; and how many projects were awarded funding. [153222]

Estelle Morris: The amount of Heritage Lottery funding awarded to Altricham and Sale, West constituency in each of the last five years together with the number of projects funded was:

Financial year	*Heritage lottery funding*	*Number of projects*
1997–98	257,800	3
1998–99	0	0
1999–2000	0	0
2000–01	44,000	1
2001–02	0	0
2002–03	0	0

Repeat Offenders

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what programmes her Department has set up to encourage the reform of repeat offenders. [153824]

Estelle Morris: There are a number of ways in which the Department seeks to prevent offending, including repeat offending, through engagement by young people in arts and sports activities, for example:

Positive Futures:

We are key partners in this national sports—based social inclusion programme targeted at marginalised 10 to19-year-olds in the most deprived areas. It aims to build relationships between responsible adults and young people based on mutual trust and respect in order to create new opportunities for alternative lifestyles.

Unit for Arts and Offenders:

Funded through the Arts Council of England, the Unit for Arts and Offenders is a national umbrella organisation that supports the development of the arts within criminal justice settings.

Positive Activities for Young People:

We are one of a number of Government Departments and agencies that work together to deliver Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP). PAYP is a three year cross Government and Lottery funded school holiday activity programme that aims to reduce street crime, build community cohesion and encourage children and young people to return to education or training by engaging them in high quality sport and art

activities. It is targeted at young people most at risk of truancy or offending and areas with high levels of street crime or community cohesion problems.

Sport England

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the *(a)* technical and financial contracts, *(b)* technical consultants used on a call-off basis and *(c)* financial consultants used on a call-off basis by Sport England since 1 January 2003; what the nature of the assignment for each consultant was; and what the value of work done by each consultant was. [154122]

Mr. Caborn: Details of contracted consultants for Sport England in the calendar year starting on 1 January 2003 are as follows.

Name	*Service*	*Type of service*	*Cost (£)*
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Tax/VAT Advice	Regular, ongoing technical advice	72,479.63
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Communications; Electronic Document Records; Cash Management and Procurement Strategy	One off consultancies; financial	76,069.50
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Internal Audit Advice/Services	Regular, ongoing financial	17,841.90
Mazars	Internal Audit Advice/Services	Regular, ongoing financial	67,945.00
Baker Mallett	Quantity Surveying and Project Management	Regular, ongoing financial	24,200.00
Capita Property Management	Quantity Surveying and Project Management	Regular, ongoing financial	91,878.50
EC Harris	Quantity Surveying and Project Management	Regular, ongoing financial	167,180.21
JR Knowles Capital	Quantity Surveying and Project Management	Regular, ongoing financial	239,414.59
Pick Everard	Quantity Surveying and Project Management	Regular, ongoing financial	65,921.50
Turner & Townsend	Quantity Surveying and Project Management	Regular, ongoing financial	160,250.47

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Indian Ocean Territory

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the income expected this year is from fishing licences in the British Indian Ocean Territories; and what it was in each of the past five years. [153941]

Mr. Rammell: Income this year (financial year 2003–04) to 31 December 2003 from fishing licences was £534,309. We cannot predict the expected income for the final quarter, but it is unlikely that revenue will reach that of previous years.

Income from fishing licences in the past five years in the British Indian Ocean Territory was as follows:

Financial year	*Income (£)*
1998–99	2,271,595
1999–2000	744,042
2000–01	1,108,072
2001–02	822,497
2002–03	613,060

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the evidential basis was for the comment by the Minister for State, the hon. Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Mike O'Brien), on Newsnight on 3 February that Iraq is the only country to use weapons of mass destruction. [153927]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As my hon. Friend knows, Iraq under Saddam Hussein is the only country to have used weapons of mass destruction against both neighbours and its own people. This is a fact that neither my hon. Friend nor any other hon. Member has disputed in the past.

It was this point that I was attempting to make in the discussion when I was interrupted by the presenter of the programme.

Passports/Visas

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of the United States on their policy that all visitors from the United Kingdom travelling on passports issued after 16 October without a biometric chip will require a visa; and if he will make a statement. [154470]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote to the US Secretary of State on 16 December 2003 to express concern at the US legislation and suggest that a joint FCO/UK Passport Service delegation visit Washington to discuss ways forward. The team visited Washington from 21–23 January. It asked the US to extend its deadline of 26 October 2004 for visitors' new UK passports to contain either a biometric identifier or a US visa. The US noted the UK position, and a formal response is awaited.

The scale of the technical challenge currently makes the US requirement unachievable for the UK, and most other countries, before the end of 2005.

British citizens visiting the US with machine-readable passports issued before 26 October 2004 are not affected by the new US requirement.

Tristan da Cunha

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visits the Governor of Tristan da Cunha has made to *(a)* Tristan da Cunha and *(b)* the Ascension Islands in the last five years. [154198]

Mr. Rammell: The Governor has made four visits to Tristan da Cunha since 2001, the latest of which was in January this year.

The Governor has made 14 visits to Ascension Island in the last five years.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many ministerial visits have been made to *(a)* Tristan da Cunha and *(b)* the Ascension Islands in the last five years. [154199]

Mr. Rammell: There have been no ministerial visits to Tristan da Cunha in the last five years. I visited Ascension Island in November 2003 and took the opportunity to meet with Island Councillors at their Chamber. Ministers also regularly transit the Island on their way to and from the Falkland Islands.

UK Businesses (Exports)

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how his Department *(a)* encourages and *(b)* assists UK businesses to export. [153866]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A key role of UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) (formerly British Trade International)—a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department of Trade and Industry department—is to present the benefits of internationalising business as well as equipping firms with the information and capabilities to fulfil their export potential. UKTI encourages and assists business by offering a range of services to companies, details of which are contained in its current Departmental Report issued in May 2003 (Cm 5915). UKTI's Departmental Report for 2003–04 will issue in April 2004. Copies of Departmental Reports are laid in the Library of the House.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the extent of the clearing of landmines in Afghanistan in each of the last two years; and what the contribution of the United Kingdom has been. [148115]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: According to figures produced by Landmine Monitor and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), clearance of landmines and associated activities in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002, the last years for which reports are available, have been as follows:

	2001	*2002*
Minefield clearance (sq km)	15.6	19.0
Battle area clearance (sq km)	81.2	92.6
Minefield survey (sq km)	14.7	25.2
Battle area survey (sq km)	80.8	92.5
Mine awareness training (people)	730,000	2,448,151

DFID has provided the following sums for mine action in Afghanistan: £3 million in 2001–02 and £1.8 million in 2002–03.

We are currently considering further support for UNMAS in Afghanistan.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent estimate he has made of the number of Afghan refugees in *(a)* Pakistan and *(b)* Iran. [149972]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The most recent estimate by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), of Afghan refugees in Pakistan is 1.6 million individuals. The number, however, is difficult to assess accurately as there has not been a registration since 1995. In addition, there are significant numbers of Afghans in Pakistan who are not refugees. In Iran UNHCR's estimate is 1.9 million. Here most of the Afghan refugees are registered, although there may be a significant margin of error.

Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what plans his Department has to assist African governments with the implementation of the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial Declaration; [153151]

(2) what plans he has to discuss the implementation of the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial Declaration with the Government of Cameroon; and what steps he is taking to assist the implementation of the indicative actions relating to bushmeat; [153154]

(3) what plans his Department has to combat illegal logging in *(a)* Ghana and *(b)* Cameroon in the next 12 months; [153210]

(4) what discussions he has had with the World Bank concerning the implementation of the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial Declaration; [153212]

(5) if he will discuss the implementation of the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial Declaration with the Government of Ghana; and what plans he has to assist the implementation of the indicative actions relating to the issue of bushmeat. [153214]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) Conference was held in Cameroon in October 2003. The Declaration commits timber producing and consuming countries to tackle illegal logging and associated trade. It includes an extensive list of "indicative actions". The Declaration suggested that the World Bank finance a meeting of regional representatives of the AFLEG process and decide on the next steps and the next meeting of the United Nations Forum on Forests, in Geneva in May, is the most suitable occasion for this follow-up and we are in discussion with the World Bank about this. We have also discussed with the World Bank a review of the effects of economic reform programmes on forest law enforcement and governance, as called for in the Declaration.

The UK's support to the AFLEG declaration will be delivered through the EU and through the programmes of the Department for International Development (DFID). The UK is working with the European Commission and member states on the EU Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. The Action Plan provides for Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) between the EU and timber producing countries. Initial discussions with Cameroon and Ghana on VPAs took place in London in December. Further discussions will be organised by the European Commission and member states with these and other African countries in the coming months.

At the London meeting in December officials from Cameroon explained that they would incorporate AFLEG follow-up actions within their sector reform programme (the Forest and Environment Sector Programme). This Programme spans forest and wildlife management. It aims to improve governance and will emphasise the involvement of local communities in management. DFID has, with other development agencies, supported the development of this Programme and is currently in discussion with the Government of Cameroon about their future support. Our support will be to the programme as a whole and not to any particular elements of it. In addition to this, over the next twelve months we will continue our support to independent monitoring of timber harvesting by Global Witness.

In Ghana DFID has been supporting a broad programme of forest and wildlife sector reform over many years. This has radically changed the institutions and the way natural resources are managed, promoting better governance and greater accountability. Over the next 12 months the new timber concession system will be implemented which includes better environmental standards and social responsibility agreements with forest fringe communities. In addition, DFID is supporting two new initiatives to improve the involvement and oversight of civil society and Parliament in forest and wildlife management.

The list of "indicative actions" included in the AFLEG Declaration is not a plan of action. We have not singled out support to any "indicative actions" related to bushmeat. Our support to sector reforms in both Ghana and Cameroon does, however, aim to strengthen the capacity of those countries to deal with wildlife and poverty issues. It is for the governments concerned to prioritise actions within their sector reform programmes.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what percentage of staff employed within his Department are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145929]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The following table shows the number and percentage of staff in DFID aged 55 and over at 1 April 2003. The figures are based on the headcount of permanent civil servants.

Number and percentage of staff in DFID aged 55 and over at 1 April 2003

	DFID
Age 55 plus	150
Others	1,490
Total	1,640
Percentage of staff aged 55 plus	9.1

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Rounding may lead to inconsistencies between the sum of individual cells and the totals are calculated from the unrounded numbers.
Source:
DFID

The following table shows the number and percentage of recruits to DFID over the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 who are aged 55 years and over. Figures are based on the headcount of Permanent civil servants.

Number and percentage of recruits to DFID over the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 aged 55 and over

	DFID
Age 55 plus	10
Others	120
Total	130
Percentage of recruits aged 55 plus	8.1

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Rounding may lead to inconsistencies between the sum of individual cells and the totals are calculated from the unrounded numbers.
Source:
DFID

Liberia

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to ensure greater transparency in the Transitional Government in Liberia. [153346]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) has agreed, with the support of the international community, a Results Focused Transitional Framework to guide the process of reconstruction during its two-year period of office. It includes benchmarks on improved governance, democratic development, the rule of law, and transparency and accountability of public institutions (including those responsible for the financial sector and procurement).

The NTGL has taken several steps to improve public financial management. It has made the Ministry of Finance solely responsible for tax and revenue collection and has made it a criminal offence for other officials to collect them; it has ended the monopolies on rice and petroleum products; and it has announced audits of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company, the Forestry Development Authority, the National Port Authority, the Bureau of Maritime Affairs and Roberts International Airport. It has also set up committees to examine measures needed to bring order to the forestry and diamond industries and to the aircraft registry. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in August 2003, provides for free and fair elections in October 2005.

We support the NTGL in these objectives. For 2003 and 2004, we have committed a total of £16.6 million in bilateral aid and £13 million as our share of the EU budget for Liberia.

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Tom Kelly

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Prime Minister for what reasons he has not dismissed Mr. Tom Kelly as his official spokesman following the publication of Lord Hutton's criticism of him. [154056]

The Prime Minister: My official spokesman made an immediate and very full apology at the time, and he repeated it to the inquiry. Lord Hutton deals with this in his report.

Cabinet Secretary

Mr. Gray: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 713W, of the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what dates *(a)* the then Cabinet Secretary reported that he had been approached by IBM UK to join its advisory board, *(b)* the then Cabinet Secretary sought the Prime Minister's permission to take up the appointment and *(c)* the Prime Minister gave his approval for the appointment to be taken up; and what the conditions were on that approval. [154362]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Alexander) on 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 13W. This appointment was accounted for in the second report of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister what the first date was on which he told President Bush that the UK would be prepared to go to war with the US against Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [154457]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 11 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 868W.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Renewable Energy

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to *(a)* re-examine and *(b)* change the renewables obligation on electricity suppliers; and if she will make a statement. [154231]

Mr. Timms: A review of the Renewables Obligation will take place in 2005–06. Last December, the Government announced an increase in the level of the Obligation for the years between 2010 and 2015 so that it increases in stages to 15.4 per cent. by 2015–16.

There will be a statutory order to give effect to some technical changes from 1 April 2004 following a consultation exercise last autumn. The statutory consultation needed to implement the extension of obligation will take place later this year and may contain other proposals to mitigate the risk of future shortfalls in the renewables buyout fund.

Baku to Ceyhan Pipeline

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the environmental impact of the Baku to Ceyhan pipeline; and if she will make a statement. [153744]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ECGD carried out a rigorous assessment of the environmental, social and human rights impacts of the BTC pipeline project in accordance with its Case Impact Analysis Process.

ECGD assessed the project using World Bank and EU environmental guidelines and standards. The Department studied over 11,000 pages of project documentation covering the environmental and social impacts; met with, and received comments from, interested third parties, including those arising out of ECGD's public disclosure procedure, and carried out a site visit. Independent environmental consultants were also employed to assess the project and assist in ECGD's analysis.

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with representatives of the US Department of Energy regarding the BNFL contract to build a nuclear processing plant in Idaho; and if she will make a statement. [142132]

Mr. Timms: BNFL's subsidiary BNFL Inc. has a contract with US DoE to manage waste at a facility in Idaho—the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Plant. My officials have liaised with USDoE and the company on the settlement of claims for compensation under the terms of the contract. These discussions are a commercial matter.

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her Written Statement of 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 93–95WS, on BNFL strategy review, if she will make a statement on the future of BNFL's US subsidiaries. [R] [148979]

Mr. Timms: As set out in my announcement, the priority for BNFL going forward is to focus on UK clean up. Against this background, the objective relating to the US activities is to manage the businesses to deliver value and in a way that limits and controls risk to the UK taxpayer. In relation to the Westinghouse business, the Government have agreed with the BNFL Board that steps will be taken to enable the business to operate with greater financial independence from its parent, so that possibilities for private sector participation are opened up.

Broadband (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on roll-out of broadband in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley; and how (i) urban and (ii) rural businesses will benefit. [153842]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon Friend to the answer I gave on 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1167W, covering the roll-out of broadband in Lancashire. The roll-out of broadband is primarily a matter for the Operators. According to BT's website (www.bt.com/broadband/), Chorley's telephone exchange has been enabled for broadband via ADSL since 30 June 2002. Broadband in Chorley may also be available over cable television, satellite and fixed wireless networks.

In November 2003, I called for public bodies, broadband providers and community organisations to work together to bring broadband availability to every community in the UK by the end of next year. BT and others have since come forward to support this target.

Broadband will enable urban and rural businesses to become more productive, innovative and competitive. The joint DTI/DEFRA Rural Broadband Unit has recently published a toolkit to help businesses in rural areas understand the issues and benefits of broadband. Further information for the benefits small businesses can get from broadband is available on the UK Online For Business website, including an availability checker, (http://www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk/cms/template/general-content.sp?id=249178)

Building Maintenance (Door-to-door Sales)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to address problems caused by the door-to-door selling of building maintenance. [153569]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government are concerned about the practices adopted by some doorstep traders and welcomed the Office of Fair Trading's investigation of the doorstep selling market. The investigation report is expected in the next couple of months. Recommendations resulting from the investigation will be considered very carefully.

Business Links

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses were helped by each Business Link operator in England in 2001–02. [153577]

Nigel Griffiths: The following table shows the number of businesses assisted by Business Link Operators from April 2001 to 31 March 2002.

	Number
County Durham	1,585
Northumberland	516
Tees Valley	3,293
Tyne and Wear	3,286
Cheshire and Warrington	3,714
Cumbria	4,916
East Lancashire	2,973
Manchester	10,873
Merseyside	5,860
North and West Lancashire	3,156
North Manchester	2,894
Humberside	5,392
North Yorkshire	7,160
South Yorkshire	3,986
West Yorkshire	14,761
Derbyshire	5,399
Leicestershire	4,425
Lincolnshire and Rutland	4,026
Northamptonshire	2,224
Nottinghamshire	4,659
Birmingham and Solihull	9,179
Black Country	4,645
Coventry and Warwickshire	4,392
Hereford and Worcestershire	4,875
Shropshire	1,629
Staffordshire	5,195
Bedfordshire	1,997
Cambridgeshire	2,790
Essex	5,441
Hertfordshire	7,100
Norfolk	3,894
Suffolk	2,746
London	27,090
Berkshire	3,146
Hampshire and Isle of Wight (Wessex)	6,204
Kent	8,063
Milton Keynes, Oxon, Bucks	7,077
Surrey	5,879
Sussex	11,001
Devon and Cornwall	9,872
Dorset (Wessex)	2,659
Gloucestershire	3,509
Somerset	1,979
West	5,699
Wiltshire	4,183
Total	245,342

Innovation and Growth Teams

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what feedback she has received from each sectoral innovation and growth team in relation to the impact of regulation on *(a)* innovation and *(b)* competiveness in their sectors. [153553]

Ms Hewitt: The aim of any Innovation and Growth Team (IGT) is to identify the key issues which will shape the future of a particular industry and how the UK can best respond to the competitive challenges which it will face. In view of this, regulation, innovation and competitiveness issues are at the core of all IGTs.

So far, IGTs covering the automotive, chemicals, environmental, aerospace and bioscience sectors have published final reports which have been placed in the Libraries of the House. IGTs covering software/digital content and electronics are still under way. A similar initiative covering the retail sector is due to lead to a final report by the Retail Strategy Group in April 2004.

Civil Partnerships Bill

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the timetable for the publication of the Civil Partnerships Bill. [152618]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* The Government hope to introduce the Civil Partnership Bill into Parliament this session.

Electricity Industry

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of projected surplus capacity of electricity supply for the next winter; and if she will make a statement. [153370]

Mr. Timms: National Grid Transco, in a January update to their 7-year statement, project a generation plant margin of between 22.7 per cent. and 22.9 per cent. for the winter of 2004–05.

NETA places strong incentives on suppliers to contract for their customers' demand and also places strong incentives on generators to deliver the power that they have contracted to deliver.

Electricity Supply

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the non-disclosed conclusions of the report of her investigation into the power cuts that affected *(a)* areas of London and Kent on 28 August 2003 and *(b)* the West Midlands on 5 September 2003. [153920]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement I made to the House on 22 January 2004, in which I explained that the conclusions and recommendations of the investigation undertaken by DTI's Engineering Inspectorate were being passed to the electricity companies concerned on a confidential basis, so that they could take the necessary action to enhance the robustness of their networks.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she has made requests to the Board of National Grid Transco to permit her to disclose the findings of the Engineering Inspectorate's investigation into the cause of the power cuts in London and the West Midlands last August; and if she will make a statement. [154213]

Mr. Timms: As I explained to the House on 22 January, recommendations and conclusions of the Engineering Inspectorate's investigation were being passed to the companies concerned on a confidential basis. The Engineering Inspectorate is holding confidential discussions with the companies concerned and monitoring the action theytake. In my statement I drew attention to the fact that, the material gathered in connection with the investigation is commercially sensitive and its disclosure is restricted by the provisions of the Utilities Act 2000. Those considerations continue to apply to the on-going discussions between the Engineering Inspectorate and the companies and therefore no requests have been made to the companies for agreement to disclosure.

Employment Agencies (Migrant Worker Prosecutions)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many employment agencies have *(a)* been (i) prosecuted and (ii) fined for offences relating to the exploitation of migrant workers under the Employment Agencies Act 1973 and *(b)* had allegations against them regarding the exploitation of migrant workers investigated by her Department's Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate in each of the last five years; how many persons have been banned from being associated with operating an employment agency or employment business after being prosecuted in relation to the exploitation of migrant workers in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [153008]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In the last five years the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate has prosecuted 24 employment agencies and prohibited 7 individuals from operating as employment agencies or employment business.

The Inspectorate has also undertaken 5,607 investigations during the last five years.

The records do not specify whether the work-seekers involved were migrant workers.

Employment Rights (Ministers of Religion)

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure that ministers of religion have the same employment rights as other employees. [153394]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have been considering the current coverage of employment protections as part of the Employment Status Review, including the position of the clergy; we hope to make an announcement shortly.

EU Regulations

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about her request for EU Finance Ministers to commit to a timetable to eliminate wasteful regulations. [146083]

Ms Hewitt: I discuss a wide range of business competitiveness issues with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Finance Ministers of the four member states that will hold the EU presidency in 2004 and 2005, including the UK, launched a Joint Initiative on Regulatory Reform on 26 January. This reflects the Government's priorities in this area, including simplification of EU legislation in key areas affecting business, and will reinforce the work of the Competitiveness Council which has a 'horizontal' remit to consider any EU legislation with an impact on competitiveness.

I have placed a copy of the letter that launched the initiative in the Libraries of the House.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people were employed by the Export Credits Guarantee Department in each year from 1996 to 2003. [153935]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The average number of whole time equivalent persons employed (including senior management) during the years 1996 to 2003 was as follows:

Year	*Average number*
1995–96	444
1996–97	397
1997–98	382
1998–99	359
1999–2000	360
2000–01	380
2001–02	372
2002–03	378

Faroes Vessel Claims

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims have been submitted to her Department under the revised deadline for vessels classed as Faroes Vessels. [152392]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department received representations that 95 vessels be considered for addition to the list of Qualifying Icelandic Water Vessels. A further 25 vessels, in respect of which appeals are currently with the scheme's Independent Adjudicator, were also considered by officials for addition to the list.

Transgenic Fish

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many patent applications are pending which relate to transgenic fish. [153869]

Ms Hewitt: Two patent applications relating to transgenic fish are pending before the UK Patent Office. There may be others among the thousands of applications early in the application process, which have not yet been sorted into specific subject areas.

Fur Trade (Domestic Animals)

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the European Union regarding an EU ban on the trade in domestic dog and cat fur. [152853]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK Government's view is that any action on the issue of the alleged trade in domestic cat and dog fur would be most effective if taken at EU level. In November 2002, my noble Friend, the then Minister for International Trade and Investment publicly supported calls by the European Parliament for an EU ban on the trade in these furs. Late last year, the UK Government also supported Denmark and the Netherlands in calls for the European Commission to consider measures to put an end to any import of domestic cat and dog fur. The Government continue to be in regular contact with other interested member states to discuss what proportionate action on this issue may be appropriate at EU level.

Low-carbon Technologies

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what policies she is pursuing to encourage a shift towards low-carbon technologies. [154219]

Mr. Timms: The Government are pursuing a wide range of policies and measures to encourage a shift towards low carbon technologies. These are described in the Energy White Paper "Our energy future—creating a low carbon economy" which was published in February 2003. They include giving priority to renewables, promoting energy efficiency and making the EU Emissions Trading Scheme a key part of our future market framework.

Key measures for which the DTI is responsible include the Renewables Obligation and capital grants for renewables, clean coal technology, and carbon capture and storage.

In addition, the Research Councils support a broad range of energy research, which will be given increased focus and coherence with the establishment of a new UK Energy Research Centre later this year.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much nuclear waste has been *(a)* imported into the United Kingdom, *(b)* reprocessed in the United Kingdom and *(c)* subsequently exported from the United Kingdom in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [153371]

Mr. Timms: The UK does not allow the import of radioactive waste, but foreign spent fuel is received in the UK for reprocessing. Details of fuel deliveries and the programming of reprocessing fuel are operational and commercial matters for BNFL and its customers, but the total amount of foreign spent fuel to be reprocessed during THORP's baseload period of operation is 4,547 tonnes.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many tons of radioactive waste were shipped to the United Kingdom for storage in each year since 1997; and what the projected figures are for each of the next four years. [153984]

Mr. Timms: The UK does not allow the import of radioactive waste, but foreign spent nuclear fuel is received in the UK for reprocessing. Details of fuel deliveries are operational and commercial matters for BNFL and its customers.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the contract for the consultation paper on proposals for intermediate level radioactive waste substitution, published in January 2004, was put out to competitive tender; how NAC International Consultancy was chosen to prepare the document; who the other bidders were; and what account was taken of NAC International's existing contracts with BNFL in making the selection. [154206]

Mr. Timms: The DTI issued an invitation to tender (ITT) to undertake the study on Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste Substitution on 18 November 2002.

Bids were received from six companies by the due closing date of 6 December 2002. All complied with the ITT and in material respects, with all other commercial evaluation criteria laid down by the Department's procurement manual. The Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Exemption 13 Third Party's Commercial Confidences) exempts the bidders from being named.

NAC were selected on the basis of relevant experience, value for money and the ability to deliver a quality report to agreed timescales. NAC, together with four other companies provided statements of independence with their tenders.

NAC is an international company providing consultancy services on a wide range of nuclear issues. We are advised by NAC that its work for BNFL amounts to around 0.3 per cent. of current turnover. Most of NAC's turnover is generated from work conducted outside of the UK.

Manufacturing Jobs (Shrewsbury and Atcham)

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many manufacturing jobs were lost in Shrewsbury and Atcham in *(a)* each year since 1997 and *(b)* each month in the last 12 months. [151362]

Jacqui Smith: The data for manufacturing jobs in Shrewsbury and Atcham for each year since 1997 are not available.

However the figures for manufacturing job losses over the past year month by month are as follows:

Month	*Total manufacturing jobs lost*	*Companies where losses occurred*
October 2002	129	RAPRA Leoni Wiring Eden Vale
February 2003	120	Perkins Engines
April 2003	132	Comau Estil Leoni Wiring Churchill and Bramhall
August 2003	37	Stadco Leaf Metals
September 2003	33	Scott and Newman
December 2003	79	Perkins Engines
January 2004	50	Doncasters

Source:
Job Centre Plus Telford

Where a month is not shown no manufacturing job losses were recorded.

Offshore Call Centres

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the potential impact upon an individual's rights under UK data protection legislation arising from the move of call centres and data processing offshore. [153731]

Ms Hewitt: Where a company established in the UK either processes personal data itself in another country or has personal data processed on its behalf under contract by a company in another country, the UK company retains full responsibility for ensuring that the processing complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. In particular, UK companies must comply with the eighth Data Protection Principle which prohibits the transfer of personal data from the UK to a country or territory outside the EEA unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of data protection.

Offshore Oil and Gas Facilities

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the *(a)* Government and *(b)* European Commission are taking to prevent improper support payments to contractors and sub-contractors by *(a)* governments and *(b)* government agencies competing for construction work in Britain's offshore gas and oil industries. [154272]

Mr. Timms: The EU state aid rules are intended to prevent improper payments that can distort competition in the Single Market. The rules apply impartially to funding from all member states and to all levels of government and government agencies. The European Commission is the guardian of the state aid rules and they must examine aid to ensure that it does not distort the Single Market. All aid must be notified to and approved by the European Commission before it can be granted. The Commission is also obliged to investigate any allegations of illegal aid and if necessary take action. This may include recovery action in some cases.

The Government strongly support the state aid regime and all Government funding must be given in accordance with the rules. The Government will also bring to the Commission's attention allegations of illegal aid in other member states.

Part-time Workers

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures have been introduced since 1997 to improve employment rights for part-time workers. [153603]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 introduced new rights for part-time workers ensuring that part-timers are not treated less favourably than comparable full-timers in their terms and conditions, unless it is objectively justified.

The measures reinforce the Government's policy of putting in place decent minimum standards whilst promoting a flexible and competitive workforce.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, how many businesses have been helped by each regional development agency; what the average sum of money received by these businesses is; how many of the businesses helped are still operating; and how many of these businesses have increased their profitability. [148189]

Jacqui Smith: *[pursuant to her reply, 28 January 2004, c. 376W]:* Unfortunately the table referred to in the final paragraph was not provided. Following is the complete text.

England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) help businesses both directly and indirectly through a range of activities and programmes including skills development, upgrading infrastructure and improving business competitiveness of the region in general.

Information on how many businesses have been helped, the average sum of money received, how many are still operating, and how many have increased their profitability, is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The number of businesses added to the regional economy as a direct result of RDA activity is available for financial year 2002—2003 and is broken down by Agency in the following table. The information is also available on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/rda/info/.

RDA	Total number of new businesses added to the regional economy in 2002-03 as a direct result of RDA activities
Advantage West Midlands	170
East of England Development Agency	156
East Midlands Development Agency	225
London Development Agency	1,368
North West Development Agency	603
One North East	717
South East of England Development Agency	141
South West Regional Development Agency	525
Yorkshire Forward	826
Total	4,203

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many regional development agency projects are being evaluated; and when the results will be known. [153586]

Jacqui Smith: All projects undertaken by England's Regional Development Agencies go through an evaluation process once the project impact can be assessed, usually at least six months after the projects are completed. To ensure compliance with guidance issued by the Department each agency has a project performance and evaluation team which is tasked with determining the success of the project, to identify lessons to be incorporated into other projects and to improve processes. The agencies are also collectively developing a mechanism to share the outcomes of evaluations carried out.

Research Councils

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent by each of the Research Councils in each of the last six years. [152048]

Ms Hewitt: Please see the following table for a breakdown of spend by Research Council since 1997–98.

£000

Research Council	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03
BBSRC	206,648	206,863	209,127	230,697	248,681	275,752
CCLRC	118,624	117,819	115,015	118,345	129,019	124,158
EPSRC	392,870	389,889	400,366	429,157	541,962	573,425
ESRC	65,993	69,083	72,119	77,265	82,167	88,107
MRC	320,115	311,513	344,383	372,753	438,057	456,566
NERC	218,397	223,876	242,025	259,465	280,012	278,665
PPARC	215,869	207,480	184,703	216,613	230,380	267,387
Total expenditure	1,322,647	1,319,043	1,383,035	1,487,682	1,719,898	1,796,673

Notes:
1. Figures shown are sourced from the Research Councils financial accounts and exclude notional cost of capital.
2. Figures shown are total spend by each council, financed from all sources.

Small Business

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many small businesses increased their profits above £15,000 in each year since 1997; and what the percentage change was in each year. [153556]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The following table gives the figures requested:

First year	Second year	Number of businesses with profits[1,2] above £15,000 in second year but below £15,000 in first year	Percentage moving above £15,000 of the total below £15,000 in the first year
1997–98	1998–99	245,000	7.8
1998–99	1999–2000	260,000	8.3
1999–2000	2000–01	266,000	8.5
2000–01	2001–02	284,000	9.0

[1] For Incorporated Businesses, profits chargeable to Corporation Tax.
[2] For Unincorporated Businesses, Taxable Profits.

Supermarkets

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what discussions she has had with the Office of Fair Trading in respect of the supermarkets' voluntary code of practice; and if she will make a statement; [153482]

(2) when she anticipates the Office of Fair Trading will report on its inquiry into the operation of the supermarkets' voluntary code of practice. [153483]

Mr. Sutcliffe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has had no discussions so far with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) on this issue, because they are carrying out an independent review of the statutory Code of Practice governing supermarkets' relations with their suppliers. The OFT is expected to conclude its review shortly. My right hon. Friend will then decide if any action is necessary.

Textiles (Pakistan)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with the Pakistan Government on the export of Pakistan-produced textiles into the European Union. [147542]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Officials in the Department have had frequent contacts with representatives of the Government of Pakistan over a Commission proposal to impose anti-dumping duties on cotton-type bed linen originating in Pakistan. At my request, the Director, Market Access met a delegation of high ranking Pakistan Government officials on 7 January 2004 and conveyed to them that the UK would oppose the Commission's proposal.

UK Coal (Aid)

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received from the National Union of Mineworkers on the suspension of investment aid to UK Coal and Kellingley Colliery; and what her response was. [154471]

Mr. Timms: The Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers wrote to me on 20 December 2003 to express concern that UK Coal had announced reviews of three collieries shortly after being offered £36.5 million of Coal Investment Aid. The letter also expressed concern about UK Coal's plans for flexible working arrangements at Kellingley Colliery and sought to link the award of aid to UK Coal with a commitment that there would be no redundancies or colliery closures. In my reply of 26 January 2004, I noted the union's views. I also noted that the company had accepted the offer of up to 30 per cent. support for planned investment at five of its eight mines, including for Kellingley, and said that it would be in the best interests of everyone connected with these mines that UK Coal should be able to develop these investment plans without further delay. (I can confirm that it has since accepted the offers of aid for two of the three mines in review.) My letter also said that flexible working arrangements are a matter for UK Coal.

United Kingdom Trade

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the volume of United Kingdom trade with each of the members of the G90 was in each of the last 10 years; [146598]

(2) what the volume of United Kingdom trade with each of the members of the G33 was in each of the last 10 years; [146599]

(3) what has been the volume of United Kingdom trade with *(a)* Benin, *(b)* Burkina Faso, *(c)* Chad and *(d)* Mali in each of the last 10 years. [146604]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1288W.

Wind Farms

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how her Department's energy policy takes account of the effect on grid security and stability of large-scale remote wind generation. [152449]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 6 February, *Official Report*, column 1098W.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Student Finance

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of families have residual incomes which would mean that their children *(a)* would be entitled to claim a full grant and *(b)* would be entitled to claim a partial grant under the terms of the Higher Education Bill, broken down by constituency. [152620]

Alan Johnson: The information requested is not available by constituency. Based on the proposals for the single combined up-front grant of £2,700 in 2006/07, as detailed in the Departmental paper "Moving toward a single combined grant for higher education", we would expect:

around 30 per cent. of students to be entitled to a full grant (of which we expect around two thirds to be dependent students);

a further 50–55 per cent. to be entitled to a full or partial grant.

Future numbers and proportions of students receiving grants also depend on changes in demand for higher education and the future rate of growth of real incomes.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what arrangements he intends to put in place to recover fees and loans paid for study at British universities to students from other EU countries; and what plans he has to refuse admission to other EU students unless such recovery arrangements are accepted by the countries from which they come; [154241]

(2) what discussions he intends to have with other EU Governments on putting in place the machinery for recovery from their country of fees and loans made to students at British universities through *(a)* the tax system of their country of origin and *(b)* the tax system of other countries in which they work. [154242]

Alan Johnson: The Student Loans Company (SLC) are responsible for ensuring repayments are made when they fall due, and have well established procedures for recovering loans from graduates living and working outside the UK. All students taking out a loan are required to sign a declaration agreeing to repay, even if they move abroad. The SLC have a range of sanctions that can be imposed on defaulters. Officials and SLC are exploring ways to ensure the most robust and effective loan recovery mechanisms are in place. There are no plans which would allow HEIs to refuse admission to EU students.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will announce his decisions on the Building Schools for the Future programme; and if he will make a statement. [154030]

Mr. Miliband: We aim to announce successful projects in the first wave of Building Schools for the Future shortly. A written statement will be made to Parliament. Later this year, we expect to make announcements about subsequent waves of funding.

Faith Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what procedures need to be followed to open a new faith school within the state sector. [153253]

Mr. Miliband: The procedures for opening a new faith school within the state sector are the same as for any other new school, except that faith schools must also be designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character. Procedures will always involve consultation in the local area and an opportunity for interested parties to make representations on the proposals, but in

the case of additional secondary schools, the LEA must invite others to bring forward proposals before it may publish its own proposals. Proposals brought forward by promoters may be for a maintained school or an Academy. Most proposals will be decided by the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or the independent Adjudicator where the SOC cannot reach unanimous agreement. Those for additional secondary schools and Academies will be decided by the Secretary of State, in the light of comments by the SOC. Maintained schools proposed to have a religious character will then be designated as such by the Secretary of State.

The SOC or Adjudicator may not approve proposals unless satisfied that any capital funding necessary for their implementation has been secured. Capital funding for most schools is provided by the LEA, but in the case of voluntary aided schools and Academies, up to 90 per cent. of the funding is provided directly by the DfES, with the promoter being responsible for the rest.

Foundation Degrees

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men obtained higher degrees and entered paid, full-time, permanent employment in the UK in each year since 1997, broken down by standard industrial classification of employer. [143149]

Alan Johnson: The latest available information, is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency's First Destination Record, is shown in the table.

First destination of home and EU postgraduates entering full-time paid employment in the UK

	1997/98			1998/99			1999/2000		
Standard industrial classification	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Agriculture and forestry	42	32	74	32	23	55	24	20	44
Fishing	8	2	10	2	1	3	1	1	2
Mining and quarrying	152	49	201	91	40	131	17	70	87
Manufacturing	1,058	591	1,649	855	574	1,429	530	740	1,270
Electricity, gas and water supply	130	73	203	85	69	154	4884	132	78
Construction	92	22	114	84	25	109	19	71	90
Wholesale and retail trade	189	164	353	133	133	266	119	113	232
Hotels and restaurants	16	24	40	27	22	49	25	14	39
Transport, storage and communication	290	130	420	262	113	375	148	258	406
Financial activities	555	281	836	494	237	731	250	448	698
Property development, renting, business and research	2,089	1,232	3,321	1,998	1,238	3,236	1,307	1,903	3,210
Public administration and defence	845	769	1,614	821	800	1,621	735	777	1,512
Education	4,718	8,980	13,698	4,157	9,018	13,175	9,005	4,189	13,194
Health and social work	555	991	1,546	381	828	1,209	851	361	1,212
Other community, social and personal service activities	227	336	563	270	318	588	361	234	595
Private households with employed persons	1	4	5	1	2	3	1	1	2
International organisations and bodies	2	10	12	10	10	20	14	4	18
Not known	87	69	156	102	79	181	49	61	110
Total	11,056	13,759	24,815	9,805	13,530	23,335	13,504	9,349	22,853

	2000/01			2001/02		
Standard industrial classification	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Agriculture and forestry	18	13	31	16	20	36
Fishing	1	1	2	2	1	3
Mining and quarrying	91	39	130	27	70	97
Manufacturing	684	447	1,131	447	599	1,046
Electricity, gas and water supply	78	40	118	53	72	125
Construction	61	28	89	39	82	121
Wholesale and retail trade	112	143	255	167	154	321
Hotels and restaurants	26	24	50	38	26	64
Transport, storage and communication	219	119	338	108	167	275
Financial activities	514	251	765	245	425	670
Property development, renting, business and research	1,832	1,351	3,183	1,154	1,620	2,774
Public administration and defence	830	957	1,787	958	873	1,831
Education	4,106	9,897	14,003	11,348	4,687	16,035
Health and social work	318	884	1,202	865	375	1,240
Other community, social and personal service activities	243	322	565	369	206	575
Private households with employed persons	0	1	1	2	0	2
International organisations and bodies	3	8	11	13	15	28
Not known	36	37	73	17	20	37
Total	9,172	14,562	23,734	158,686	9,412	25,280

Higher Education

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the consolidation of the £170 million funding to support higher education institutions' human resources policies into the main teaching fund will be in addition to the annual teaching fund grant increases for 2004–05 and 2005–06. [152664]

Alan Johnson: The £170 million Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative funding for 2003–04 will be consolidated into the block teaching grant from 2004–05 onwards. This funding is in addition to the annual teaching fund increases for 2004–05. The figures for 2005–06 have not yet been announced.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate was made in the regulatory impact assessment of the total cost to a higher education institution (HEI) of pursuing the new proposals, ring-fenced funds and initiatives which will require payments to be made by HEIs. [152777]

Alan Johnson: The regulatory impact assessment published on 8 January alongside the HE Bill includes details of the costs of the proposals in the Bill and the associated package of improvements in student support.

In November, we announced the mainstreaming of four ring fenced funds into larger funding allocations ('Golden Hellos', the Promising Researcher Fellowship Scheme, Additional Capital for leading research institutions and Knowledge Exchanges). We continue to monitor the number of special funding allocations to ensure that they are appropriately targeted and that demands on institutions are proportionate to the sums involved.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list proposals in the Higher Education White Paper which have subsequently been dropped by the Government. [153066]

Alan Johnson: In light of responses to the consultations on the higher education White Paper, published in January 2003, a number of adjustments have been made to the White Paper proposals, which are now being carried forward through the Higher Education Bill and in other ways. We have decided not to incentivise the demand for Foundation Degrees; and not to ask the Office for Fair Access to have a role in ensuring that admissions procedures are fair, professional and transparent.

Schwartz Review

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will publish the report of the Schwartz Review on University Admissions. [152737]

Alan Johnson: I expect to receive Professor Schwartz's report by summer 2004, and that the recommendations will be published shortly afterwards.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Gloucestershire *(a)* are statemented, *(b)* receive special educational needs support in mainstream schools and *(c)* attend special schools; and if he will make a statement. [153404]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 6 February 2004]*: In January 2003, the most recent data available, there were 2,730 pupils in Gloucestershire who had a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils attending special schools was 1,060. For those children who were identified as having special educational needs but did not have a statement, 7,180 were educated in mainstream primary and 4,900 were educated in mainstream secondary education.

Value Added Measures

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the value added between Key Stage 3 and GCSE/GNVQ would have been if the results of specialist schools had been excluded for *(a)* Durham, *(b)* Newcastle upon Tyne, *(c)* South Tyneside, *(d)* Salford, *(e)* Blackpool, *(f)* Knowsley, *(g)* Liverpool, *(h)* St Helens, *(i)* Sefton, *(j)* North East Lincolnshire, *(k)* Kingston-upon-Hull, *(l)* Doncaster, *(m)* Leeds, *(n)* Leicestershire and *(o)* Reading local education authorities. [152308]

Mr. Miliband: The table following shows the 2003 Key Stage 3 to GCSE/GNVQ Value Added measures for each of the local education authorities when (1) Specialist schools are included and (2) Specialist schools are excluded. Figures are based on maintained schools only:

2003 key stage 3 to GCSE/GNVQ value added measures

	(1) Specialist schools included		*(2) Specialist schools excluded*	
Local education authority	*KS3-GCSE/GNVQ VA measure*	*Number of schools*	*KS3-GCSE/GNVQ VA measure*	*Number of schools*
(a) Durham	97.2	(47)	97.3	(27)
(b) Newcastle-upon-Tyne	97.3	(16)	96.7	(8)
(c) South Tyneside	97.6	(17)	97.0	(15)
(d) Salford	97.4	(17)	97.1	(14)
(e) Blackpool	97.2	(12)	96.0	(8)
(f) Knowsley	96.6	(16)	96.8	(13)
(g) Liverpool	97.4	(45)	96.2	(29)
(h) St Helens	96.9	(16)	96.4	(11)
(i) Sefton	97.7	(28)	97.5	(21)
(j) North East Lincolnshire	97.3	(14)	97.9	(9)
(k) Kingston-upon-Hull	97.1	(19)	96.5	(15)
(l) Doncaster	96.9	(25)	97.1	(16)
(m) Leeds	97.4	(52)	96.9	(31)
(n) Leicestershire	97.0	(24)	96.7	(12)
(o) Reading	97.8	(9)	97.3	(7)

These figures represent the results of one particular cohort of pupils, showing their value-added over the two years leading up to GCSE. School and LEA figures are also available in the school performance tables covering pupil value-added over the three years leading up to KS3. Similar information for each of these key stages was also published for the 2002 cohorts. Any assessment of whether particular schools or types of school are more effective than others should take into account this wider picture, as well as recognising that small differences in VA scores may not indicate significant differences in effectiveness.

TREASURY

EDS

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what amount EDS has been liable in penalties to the Inland Revenue in each year since 1998–99; and if he will make a statement. [153766]

Dawn Primarolo: The Financial Remedy Credits payable by EDS to the Inland Revenue in the period referred to were as follows:

	£
1998–99	282,313
1999–2000	313,771
2000–01	53,839
2001–02	25,912
2002–03	14,622
2003–04	105,420

The years given run from 1 April to 31 March.

Higher Education Spending

Mr. Collins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his plans for higher education spending in the forthcoming Public Spending Review. [153696]

Mr. Boateng: The Government will continue to be supportive of higher education institutions in future Spending Review Settlements—world-class universities are an essential element of a competitive economy.

Invest to Save

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) when the next round of bidding for the Invest to Save budget will take place; [154322]

(2) if he will make a statement on the future of the Invest to Save budget. [154354]

Mr. Boateng: I am considering the future direction of the Invest to Save budget. An announcement on whether a further round of bidding will take place in due course.

Pensioners (Taxation)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of pensioners paying income tax at *(a)* the higher rate and *(b)* the basic rate for each year since 1996–97; and what percentage of (i) all pensioner taxpayers and (ii) all pensioners this figure represents in each case. [154509]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Havant (Mr. Willetts) on 2 July 2002, *Official Report*, column 288W. Final estimates for the years 2000–01 are in the following table.

	2000–01
Number of pensioner[1] taxpayers (thousands)	
(a) higher rate	220
(b) basic rate	2,970
(i) Percentage of all pensioner taxpayers	
(a) higher rate	5
(b) basic rate	64
(ii) Percentage of all pensioners[2]	
(a) higher rate	2
(b) basic rate	28

[1] Men aged 65 and over and women aged 60 and over.

[2] Mid-year population estimates supplied by the Office for National Statistics.

Note:

The estimates are based on the Survey of Personal Incomes 2000–01.

Pensions (Tax Relief)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate the amount of tax relief on pension contributions provided in each financial year since 1996–97 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by (i) higher rate taxpayers, (ii) basic rate taxpayers and (iii) non-taxpayers; [153904]

(2) if he will estimate the number of taxpayers receiving pension tax relief at *(a)* the higher rate and *(b)* the basic rate in each year since 1996–97; and what percentage of all taxpayers below state pension age these figures represent in each case. [154508]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* Estimates of total tax relief on pension contributions from 1998–99 to 2002–03 are contained in table T7.9 of Inland Revenue Statistics. The latest version is on the Inland Revenue website: http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/pensions/03IR079.pdf

Estimates prior to 1998–99 are contained in table 7.7 of 'Inland Revenue Statistics 2000', a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library.

Estimates of relief attributable and numbers of taxpayers receiving tax relief by marginal rate band for all the years specified in the question are not readily available. However, broad estimates of the proportion of relief and number of taxpayers receiving relief split between higher rate and others are given in the following table. The number of taxpayers below state pension age in 2002–03 is estimated at around 24½ million.

Percentage of tax relief on individual and employee pension contributions with the number of taxpayers receiving relief, 2002–03

Marginal income tax rate	*Percentage of tax relief*	*Number of taxpayers receiving relief*
Non-higher rate	45	13 million
Higher rate	55	2½ million

Note:
Estimates are provisional and based on the 2000–01 Survey of Personal Incomes projected to 2002–03.

Pirate Videos/DVDs

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* value of pirate (i) videos and (ii) DVDs seized by Customs and Excise since 1 January 2003; what the titles of the videos and DVDs were; and if he will make a statement. [154117]

John Healey: In 2003 HM Customs and Excise seized a total of 342,612 DVDs to the value of £5,223,629 and a total of 1,151 videos to the value of £10,003. Information about the titles of these videos and DVDs is not held centrally. Statistics for seizures under Intellectual Property Rights legislation are published by the European Commission.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost to the Exchequer of the sale of pirate *(a)* videos and *(b)* DVDs at (i) car-boot sales, (ii) record fairs, (iii) markets, (iv) online auctions and (v) other premises since 1 January 2003. [154130]

John Healey: No such estimates have been made.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Support Agency

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many departures from child support maintenance have been requested by non-resident parents in each year since 1997; and how many of these were granted. [147821]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. John Barrett, dated 11 February 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked how many departures from child support maintenance have been requested by non-resident parents in each year since 1997; and how many of these were granted.

The Agency does not distinguish between requests for departures from child support maintenance from non-resident parents and parents with care and we do not hold any figures relating to departures prior to April 1998. The figures that we do hold are shown in the table below:

Year ending	*Total applications received*	*Total applications granted*
1999	16,868	3,162
2000	14,147	4,393
2001	22,912	7,049
2002	21,128	8,196
2003	20,700	7,508

I hope this is helpful.

Disability Employment Advisers

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the turnover rate for disability employment advisers was in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003; and if he will make a statement. [153461]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested, as figures are not collected centrally. However, we estimate there are currently around 650 Disability Employment Advisers employed by Jobcentre Plus.

SchlumbergerSema

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many SchlumbergerSema examining medical practitioners have been *(a)* struck off and *(b)* reprimanded for their work for his Department. [152793]

Maria Eagle: Since 2000, a total of 80 doctors working for Medical Services have had approval to carry out assessments on behalf of the Department revoked, on the grounds that they have failed to meet the required professional standards despite remedial action.

Medical Services' approach is to train and support their doctors to ensure the expected standards are being met. Inappropriate behaviour or quality standards are addressed with feedback and remedial training. Where remedial action fails to effect change, approval to carry out assessments will be formally revoked.

Where a doctor's professional misconduct falls outside the General Medical Council's (GMC's) professional guidelines, this is brought to the GMC's attention by Medical Services.

Social Fund

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will provide additional assistance to those families on low incomes who receive a Social Fund *(a)* grant and *(b)* loan where the amount awarded is insufficient to cover basic household goods. [154205]

Mr. Pond: Community Care Grants, Crisis Loans and Budgeting Loans are part of the discretionary Social Fund. They are designed to provide extra help for the most vulnerable people in society, helping them meet unexpected and more routine needs. The Discretionary Social Fund net budget will be increased by 19 per cent. in April 2004 and by a further 23 per cent. in April 2005.

As the Discretionary Social Fund is cash limited decision makers may not always be able to award the full amount that a person has asked for; however they will always consider individual circumstances when making an award.

If a person believes that the grant or loan is not sufficient to meet their needs they have the right to ask for the decision to be reviewed, first by their local office and, if they disagree with the outcome, the Independent Review Service. There are no current plans to change this procedure.

Widowers (Access to Benefits)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the claims of widowers bereaved before 9 April 2001 for equal access to benefits; and if he will make a statement. [154240]

Mr. Pond: Bereavement Benefits were introduced in April 2001, for the first time extending support to both widows and widowers.

Prior to April 2001, there was no statutory basis on which to pay widows' benefits to men. This is being contested in both domestic and European courts. Until the litigation is completed and all the judgments are known regarding the different aspects of the claims, it is not possible to determine what action may be taken in response.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Crown Court Trials (National Security Issues)

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether it is possible in a Crown court trial involving national security for *(a)* a jury to be vetted prior to being empanelled and *(b)* part or all of the trial to be held in camera. [153026]

Mr. Leslie: I can confirm that it is possible for a jury to be vetted and for all or part of the trial to be held in camera in cases involving national security.

Laganside Courts Complex

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether problems at the Laganside courts complex in Belfast with *(a)* water ingress and *(b)* sight lines for juries have been resolved; and what (i) abatements and (ii) financial settlements have been applied. [152909]

Mr. Leslie: The problems with *(a)* water ingress and *(b)* sight lines for juries have been resolved. Abatements totalling £4,226.84 have been applied in respect of the later ingress. A financial settlement in respect of alterations carried out to improve sight lines for juries has yet to be agreed.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the public sector comparator for the Laganside courts Private Finance Initiative scheme in Belfast has been revised following the disposal of the Crumlin Road courthouse. [152910]

Mr. Leslie: No.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many major water leaks have occurred at the Laganside courts complex in Belfast. [152912]

Mr. Leslie: Eleven water leaks have occurred, only one of which are considered to be major.

Lord Chief Justice

David Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proposals he has for changes in the role and responsibilities of the Lord Chief Justice; and if he will make a statement. [153781]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I gave on 26 January on the judiciary-related functions of the Lord Chancellor. The Government will introduce legislation shortly to abolish the Office of Lord Chancellor.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which government departments and law enforcement agencies are represented on the cross-departmental working group looking into Part 12 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; how often the working group meets; what the remit of the working group is; and who is responsible for the group. [151383]

Paul Goggins: The Metropolitan Police chairs an ad-hoc steering group which meets as required to monitor implementation of part 12 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. It keeps under review a Memorandum of Understanding in the light of experience. The following Government Departments and Law Enforcement Agencies are represented in addition to the Metropolitan Police: City of London Police (also representing the Association of Chief Officer Police Officers (ACPO)), the Crown Prosecution Service, Serious Fraud Office, National Criminal Intelligence Service, National Crime Squad, MoD Police, Department of Trade and Industry, UK trade and investment, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Export Credits Guarantee Department, the Department for International Development and the Home Office.

DNA Database

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many DNA profile matches exist within the UK national DNA database. [153380]

Ms Blears: The figures relating to the DNA profile matches reported by the National DNA Database since its inception in April 1995 to January 2004 inclusive are described as follows:

a total of 459,903 matches have been reported between DNA profiles obtained from individuals and DNA profiles collected from unsolved crime scenes; and

a total of 28,116 scene-to-scene matches have been reported between DNA profiles collected from unsolved crime scenes.

Drugs Offences

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* arrests have been made, *(b)* convictions have been obtained and

(c) cautions have been issued in each police force area in each of the last 12 months for which figures are available for offences relating to (i) possession of and (ii) dealing in (A) Class A, (B) Class B and (C) Class C drugs. [153987]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* Data on the number of persons arrested for possession and dealing of drugs by police force area are currently not available. However, we do have the figures for the number of persons cautioned and found guilty for possession and dealing of drugs by police force area for 2002. These are set out in the following tables.

The information is taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings and Cautions Database and relates to persons cautioned and found guilty for possession and dealing in drugs.

Table 1: Number of persons cautioned and convicted for possession of controlled drugs in England and Wales by Police Force Area, 2002

	Class A		Class B		Class C	
Force	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*
England						
Avon and Somerset	171	192	1,005	306	3	4
Bedfordshire	7	62	104	80	1	0
Cambridgeshire	71	100	339	108	0	3
Cheshire	43	161	331	518	0	1
Cleveland	48	267	267	434	1	1
Cumbria	60	101	354	205	0	2
Derbyshire	16	166	114	252	1	5
Devon and Cornwall	103	361	814	596	4	2
Dorset	31	195	283	319	2	2
Durham	54	123	439	316	5	6
Essex	64	167	616	598	1	1
Gloucestershire	127	128	461	239	0	0
Greater Manchester	164	381	1,608	1,245	4	7
Hampshire	154	285	960	315	1	371
Hertfordshire	85	84	530	287	0	0
Humberside	33	98	277	320	6	13
Kent	85	289	888	905	2	6
Lancashire	127	391	900	874	2	4
Leicestershire	6	221	100	380	0	6
Lincolnshire	22	154	218	261	0	2
London, City of	31	23	448	55	1	0
Merseyside	111	288	1,072	1,377	12	1
Metropolitan Police	595	2,361	10,612	5,795	31	9
Norfolk	43	150	358	278	1	1
Northamptonshire	66	60	440	73	1	3
Northumbria	603	461	1,898	1,315	25	20
North Yorkshire	5	77	50	155	0	2
Nottinghamshire	39	275	429	351	0	2
South Yorkshire	78	376	422	672	2	5
Staffordshire	209	194	1,071	258	2	2
Suffolk	58	98	417	230	5	1
Surrey	44	103	757	330	0	0
Sussex	180	177	1,129	441	4	3
Thames Valley	142	334	867	712	2	3
Warwickshire	41	55	290	80	0	2
West Mercia	153	141	906	211	6	1
West Midlands	228	861	2,218	1,794	5	8
West Yorkshire	156	583	1,015	956	1	2
Wiltshire	18	104	192	181	0	0
Wales						
Dyfed Powys	109	168	1,300	514	3	11
Gwent	34	147	636	272	5	3
North Wales	95	119	707	308	5	1
South Wales	54	336	640	1,223	5	17
England and Wales total	4,563	11,417	38,482	26,139	149	533

Table 2: Number of persons cautioned and convicted for possession of controlled drugs in England and Wales by month, 2002

	Class A		Class B		Class C	
Month	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*
January	361	1,093	2,836	2,238	12	64
February	323	1,043	2,722	1,984	12	45
March	422	909	3,058	2,081	12	48
April	348	978	3,129	2,101	12	31
May	346	995	3,428	2,478	14	41
June	393	824	3,059	1,827	6	48
July	424	995	3,677	2,387	15	49

Table 2: Number of persons cautioned and convicted for possession of controlled drugs in England and Wales by month, 2002

	Class A		Class B		Class C	
Month	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*
August	374	906	3,157	2,180	22	28
September	352	880	3,372	2,054	8	44
October	405	1,025	3,425	2,565	9	53
November	410	986	3,303	2,362	15	45
December	405	783	3,316	1,882	12	37
Annual	4,563	11,417	38,482	26,139	149	553

Table 3: Number of persons cautioned and convicted for the dealing[1] of controlled drugs in England and Wales by month, 2002

	Class A		Class B		Class C	
Month	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*
January	14	583	81	331	2	5
February	18	590	72	327	3	5
March	19	580	86	287	1	2
April	14	542	75	298	0	10
May	11	620	97	310	4	7
June	22	417	74	258	7	9
July	25	583	120	358	5	5
August	19	448	113	338	0	9
September	12	464	117	378	5	10
October	13	483	104	360	3	13
November	22	591	108	332	1	8
December	17	420	86	268	0	5
Annual	206	6,321	1,133	3,845	31	88

[1] Dealing includes; unlawful production, unlawful supply, possession with intent to supply and unlawful import or export.

Table 4: Number of persons cautioned and convicted for the dealing[1] of controlled drugs in England and Wales by Police Force Area, 2002

	Class A		Class B		Class C	
Force	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*
England						
Avon and Somerset	5	122	52	75	0	0
Bedfordshire	0	55	10	23	0	0
Cambridgeshire	3	63	6	41	0	0
Cheshire	0	102	2	43	0	1
Cleveland	9	126	17	50	0	5
Cumbria	1	56	7	37	0	2
Derbyshire	2	136	10	57	0	0
Devon and Cornwall	4	137	65	126	0	0
Dorset	2	55	9	37	0	0
Durham	1	66	4	56	0	4
Essex	2	96	14	91	0	1
Gloucestershire	21	36	41	17	0	0
Greater Manchester	1	316	44	254	16	5
Hampshire	12	117	46	108	2	2
Hertfordshire	3	61	15	42	0	0
Humberside	0	115	21	60	0	5
Kent	12	123	23	106	0	1
Lancashire	0	254	27	115	0	2
Leicestershire	0	71	1	68	0	1
Lincolnshire	1	40	17	36	1	0
London, City of	1	10	3	5	0	0
Merseyside	0	241	7	64	0	0
Metropolitan Police	33	1,423	179	720	0	6
Norfolk	3	60	16	54	0	1
Northamptonshire	7	37	1	27	0	0
Northumbria	10	193	44	136	4	12
North Yorkshire	1	52	13	52	0	0
Nottinghamshire	2	130	25	84	1	1
South Yorkshire	1	145	10	94	0	2
Staffordshire	3	123	11	74	0	1
Suffolk	0	35	40	42	1	0
Surrey	3	55	37	32	0	1
Sussex	2	379	38	154	2	0
Thames Valley	1	129	19	104	0	0
Warwickshire	1	27	11	20	0	0
West Mercia	3	100	41	56	1	1
West Midlands	13	301	47	237	0	0
West Yorkshire	31	333	63	113	1	23
Wiltshire	0	55	13	30	0	1

Table 4: Number of persons cautioned and convicted for the dealing[1] of controlled drugs in England and Wales by Police Force Area, 2002

	Class A		Class B		Class C	
Force	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*	*Cautioned*	*Guilty*
Wales						
Dyfed Powys	6	63	44	71	0	1
Gwent	3	61	17	42	1	2
North Wales	1	45	12	46	0	0
South Wales	2	177	11	146	1	7
England and Wales total	206	6,321	1,133	3,845	31	88

[1] Dealing includes; unlawful production, unlawful supply, possession with intent to supply and unlawful import or export.

Firearms Consultative Committee

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what correspondence Home Office Ministers have *(a)* received from and *(b)* sent to members of the Firearms Consultative Committee during (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004. [154088]

Caroline Flint: Members of the Committee are appointed on a personal basis and there has been no correspondence with them in that capacity. The Chairman wrote on behalf of the Committee on 28 April 2003 to express views about certain aspects of the Anti-social Behaviour Bill. A reply was sent on 5 June.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to his Department was of convening meetings of the Firearms Consultative Committee since its inception. [154089]

Caroline Flint: A total of £14,534 has been spent on running the Firearms Consultative Committee since March 2000. Information on the cost of meetings before that date is not available from current records.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list *(a)* recommendations made by the Firearms Consultative Committee and *(b)* actions taken by his Department in response to its recommendations. [154091]

Caroline Flint: The Firearms Consultative Committee has produced a large number of recommendations since its inception and these are summarised in each of their annual reports, copies of which are in the Library. Many of their recommendations were dependent on changes in legislation and will be considered in the context of the forthcoming review.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the most recent members of the Firearms Consultative Committee, indicating the companies or organisations they work for. [154093]

Caroline Flint: Membership of the Firearms Consultative Committee as at 31 January was as follows:

Name	*Company/organisation*
David Penn (Chairman)	Imperial War Museum
Brian Carter	British Shooting Sports Council
Brian Dalton	The Royal Society for the Protection of Animals
Sandy Ewing	National Shooting Centre Ltd.
Mark Fuchter	HM Customs and Excise
Alan Green	Assistant Chief Constable, Greater Manchester Police
William Harriman	British Association for Shooting and Conservation
David Henderson	Scottish Executive Justice Department
John Hoare	National Small-Bore Rifle Association
Patrick Johnson	British Shooting Sports Council
Mike Lobb	Firearms licensing Officer Thames Valley Police
Gill Marshall-Andrews	Chair of the Gun Control Network
David Mellor	Deputy Chief Constable Fife Constabulary
Kevin O'Callaghan	Forensic Science Services Firearms Section
Bob Pitcher	London Proof House
Mark Scoggins	Fisher Scoggins LLP Solicitors
Professor Jonathan Shepherd	University of Wales College of Medicine
Madeleine Swainbank	The Defence Manufacturers Association.
Simon Taylor	Assistant Chief Constable, Norfolk Constabulary
Graham Widdecombe	Home Office, Public Order and Crime Issues Unit

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to announce the appointment of successor committees to the Firearms Consultative Committee. [154134]

Caroline Flint: We are aiming to do so by the end of March.

Forensic Science

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes have been solved by the use of forensic science in each of the forensic science service laboratories in England and Wales in each of the last three years. [153503]

Ms Blears: It is not possible to provide figures for the number of crimes that have been solved by the use of forensic science as convictions are achieved through integrated criminal investigation and not by forensic science alone. The contribution that forensic science makes to criminal investigation has been assessed separately for:

(a) DNA analysis

(b) non-DNA analysis (for example toxicology and analysis of trace evidence such as fibres, glass etc.).

The Home Office collects data on the number of crimes that have been detected, where DNA match report was available. However, it is important to note that the availability of DNA intelligence in the crime may not have been causal in solving the crime.

The total number of crimes in which a DNA match report was available that were detected for police forces in England and Wales were as follows:

	Number of crimes in which a DNA match was available
2000–01	14,785
2001–02	15,894
2002–03	21,098

No data are available on "DNA detections" for each FSS laboratory.

(a) Non-DNA analysis

The contribution of forensic science in the provision of both intelligence and evidence to criminal investigations has been evaluated internally by the Forensic Science Service (FSS). Such assessment is based on the number of cases where the FSS has judged its contribution to be effective. This information has only been recorded from April 2003-January 2004 inclusive, and is set out for each FSS laboratory in the table following.

FSS laboratory	*Number of evidential cases where the FSS has judged its contribution to be effective*	*Number of intelligence cases where the FSS has judged its contribution to be effective*
Birmingham	3,030	19,536
Chepstow	1,741	238
Chorley	3,680	768
Huntingdon	1,448	9,960
London	3,557	1,837
Wetherby	2,645	686
Overall[1]	16,103 (77 per cent.)	33,025 (80 per cent.)

[1] Percentage figures relate to the total number of cases submitted in the stated period for 'evidential' or 'intelligence' casework.

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how long DNA samples are held by the Forensic Science Service. [153767]

Ms Blears: Retention periods depend on the purpose for which the sample was taken, and are as follows:

Crime scene samples on unsolved cases may be kept indefinitely, especially for the more serious cases. For crime scene samples on solved cases the usual retention period is seven years, but it may be up to 30 years for the serious cases in the event of a possible miscarriage of justice and to capitalise on new scientific developments.

Following amendment of Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 by the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 samples of suspects can now be held indefinitely.

Where individuals have volunteered to provide samples for intelligence purposes these may also be retained indefinitely provided the individual has given their written consent for its retention.

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the storage of DNA samples by the Forensic Science Service. [153768]

Ms Blears: The laboratories that analyse DNA samples, including those within the Forensic Science Service, are also responsible for their retention, integrity, security and, where appropriate, their destruction. The conditions under which these laboratories store such samples must fulfil the requirements of the International Quality Standard ISO 17025 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

In addition, it is a specific requirement of the Custodian of the National DNA Database that DNA samples taken for entry on to the Database are kept in a managed storage system at a temperature below -15°C in access-controlled, physically secure accommodation. Laboratories are required to undertake periodic monitoring of the samples and their compliance with the International Quality Standard ISO 17025 is independently audited at least annually by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service.

Graffiti

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been convicted of offences involving graffiti in each of the past 10 years. [153612]

Ms Blears: It is not possible to distinguish offences of graffiti from other types of criminal damage in the Home Office figures for court proceedings as the circumstances of individual offences are not collected centrally.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to tackle graffiti in urban areas. [153613]

Ms Blears: A key element to the Government's drive to tackle antisocial behaviour in public places is to enforce local standards and tackle the abuse of our environment that makes public places a magnet for anti-social behaviour and crime.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduces a package of measures to prevent graffiti and to ensure that it is removed swiftly when it does occur. It also gives local authorities the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for graffiti and fly posting. This means offenders will have to pay a £50 penalty or be prosecuted through the courts.

The TOGETHER campaign places the focus on action within the heart of our communities and provides them with the opportunity to work together to tackle graffiti including a national database which will record graffiti tags, a poster campaign across transport networks which will target the most prolific graffiti 'taggers' and a pilot of 12 areas which will use new powers that enable local authorities to issue clean up notices to owners of street furniture.

Identity Card

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if, as part of the consultation for draft legislation on National Identity Cards, he will seek views on the advisability of incorporating Braille identifiers; [153296]

(2) what research has been carried out by his Department on the possibility of incorporating Braille in a proposed National Identity Card; what estimate he has made of the likely costs; and if he will make a statement. [153297]

Beverley Hughes: The Government will welcome views on how Braille identifiers could be incorporated into the National Identity Cards scheme which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced on 11 November 2003. We have no plans to carry out any specific research at this stage.

The Government propose to proceed incrementally by setting up a National Identity Register and making current widely held identity documents such as passports more secure. In determining how Braille identifiers might be incorporated into such documents, the Government will need to adhere to agreed international standards governing their format.

Lancashire Police Force

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the crime clear-up rates in Lancashire police force area broken down by *(a)* constituency and *(b)* local authority area in each year since 2000. [153509]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the tables. Figures for crimes detected by the police are not broken down by constituency or local authority areas. However, they are available at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level. BCUs broadly equate to former police divisions or districts. In Lancashire, BCUs do not correspond with local authorities. There are six BCUs, compared to 14 local authority areas.

Detection figures for recorded crime offences are available at BCU level for five key offences only; violence against the person, robbery, burglary in a dwelling, theft of a motor vehicle, and theft from a vehicle.

Detection rates for all crime, recorded by Lancashire Police

	Offences detected (percentage)
1999–2000[1]	29
2000–01[2]	27
2001–02[2]	26
2002–03[2]	27

[1] Revised Home Office instructions, which clarified the recording of detections, were introduced on 1 April 1999. These instructions provided more precise and rigorous criteria for securing a detection, with the underlying emphasis on the successful result of a police investigation. As a result of the revised detections guidance (in which some previous methods of detection were no longer counted), the numbers of crimes detected, and figures derived from them, will have been affected.

[2] Detection figures may also have been affected by the adoption of the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), as this may have affected the number of crimes recorded. The NCRS was officially implemented across England and Wales in April 2002. Lancashire Police adopted the Standard prior to this, in August 2000.

Basic Command Unit—Detection rates recorded for five key offences, by Lancashire Police from 1999–2000 to 2002–03

Violence against the person detection rate:

Basic Command Unit/ Police force	*1999–2000 (percentage)*	*2000–01 (percentage)*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Lancashire				
Lancashire Central	80	75	56	56
Lancashire Eastern	80	67	61	56
Lancashire Northern	75	67	61	62
Lancashire Southern	80	75	67	72
Lancashire Western	74	67	60	55
Pennine	83	78	67	70

Robbery detection rate:

Basic Command Unit/ Police force	*1999–2000 (percentage)*	*2000–01 (percentage)*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Lancashire				
Lancashire Central	35	25	30	29
Lancashire Eastern	23	28	30	35
Lancashire Northern	46	35	19	36
Lancashire Southern	29	45	17	33
Lancashire Western	21	14	22	27
Pennine	33	25	22	28

Burglary dwelling detection rate:

Basic Command Unit/ Police force	*1999–2000 (percentage)*	*2000–01 (percentage)*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Lancashire				
Lancashire Central	17	18	19	17
Lancashire Eastern	21	15	22	21
Lancashire Northern	15	18	16	19
Lancashire Southern	17	16	15	20
Lancashire Western	13	19	20	16
Pennine	14	13	17	19

Theft of a motor vehicle detection rate:

Basic Command Unit/ Police force	*1999–2000 (percentage)*	*2000–01 (percentage)*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Lancashire				
Lancashire Central	17	19	19	22
Lancashire Eastern	18	17	18	17
Lancashire Northern	15	20	19	23
Lancashire Southern	13	15	15	20
Lancashire Western	16	13	16	22
Pennine	17	13	14	20

Theft from a motor vehicle detection rate:

Basic Command Unit/ Police force	*1999–2000 (percentage)*	*2000–01 (percentage)*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Lancashire				
Lancashire Central	8	7	7	9
Lancashire Eastern	11	5	8	8
Lancashire Northern	7	6	8	6
Lancashire Southern	9	8	9	7
Lancashire Western	8	8	4	7
Pennine	8	5	8	11

Note:

See notes for previous table

Ministerial Police Protection

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many Ministers receive protection from the police; and what the cost to public funds is in this financial year; [153073]

(2) how many former Ministers receive protection from the police; and what the cost to public funds was in the last year for which figures are available. [153074]

Fiona Mactaggart: We seek to ensure the most effective and efficient protective security arrangements for public figures in the light of the changing threat from terrorism and other continuing risks. It is not our policy to comment on the details of protection arrangements for individuals, as to do so could compromise their security.

Official Secrets Act

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest time between (i) arrest and charge and (ii) charge and start of trial has been in cases brought since 1997 under the Official Secrets Act. [152321]

Mr. Blunkett: Data on the average and longest time between (i) arrest and charge and (ii) charge and start of trial for offences under the Official Secrets Act are not available centrally.

Press Officers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many press officers were employed in his Department in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what estimate he has made of the cost in each year. [148507]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* Press office numbers and costs are as outlined as follows:

£ million

	Number of press officers	*Cost*
2002–03 (1 April 2002)	39	[1]1.7
2003–04 (1 April 2003)	39	[2]1.9

[1] Actual.
[2] Estimate to end of March 2004.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the total prison capacity in each of the next 10 years. [147359]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is provided in the following table.

	Average useable operational capacity
2004	75,000
2005	77,100
2006	78,700
2007	78,700
2008	78,700
2009	78,700
2010	78,700
2011	78,700
2012	78,700
2013	78,700

The figures given in this table are the average useable operational capacity projected to 2006 and beyond. Useable operational capacity is the measure used for long-term estate planning purposes. It is the total number of prisoners that establishments can hold taking into account control, security and the proper operation of the planned regime. It is determined by operational managers on the basis of their operational judgment and experience.

The maximum number of prisoners that the state could normally hold, as the average operational capacity, is up to 2,000 less than the total certified operational capacity. This is because of constraints imposed by the need to provide separate accommodation for different classes of prisoner i.e. by sex, age, security category and conviction status, single cell risk assessment and also due to geographical distribution.

Two new prisons will open at Ashford, in June 2004, and Peterborough, in March 2005, and funding has also been provided for around 3,000 additional public sector prison places to be built at existing prisons by 2006. This will increase the total useable capacity of the prison estate to around 78,700. There are no plans or funding at present to increase useable capacity beyond this figure.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are serving custodial sentences of *(a)* less than 12 months and *(b)* over 12 months, broken down by nationality and gender. [154179]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* The number of prisoners serving custodial sentences in prisons in England and Wales on 30 November 2003, by nationality, gender and length of sentence, is shown in the table.

Sentenced prisoners by length of sentence, nationality and gender—30 November 2003

	Females		*Males*	
	Less than 12 months	*12 months or more*	*Less than 12 months*	*12 months or more*
Africa				
Algeria	0	0	16	37
Angola	2	1	5	22
Botswana	0	0	0	1
Burundi	1	0	0	1
Cameroon, United Republic	0	0	0	1
Central African Republic	0	0	1	4
Chad	0	0	0	1
Congo	1	0	8	23
Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	0	0	1	5

Sentenced prisoners by length of sentence, nationality and gender—30 November 2003

	Females		*Males*	
	Less than 12 months	*12 months or more*	*Less than 12 months*	*12 months or more*
Democratic Republic of Congo	0	0	4	18
Egypt	0	0	0	6
Ethiopia	0	0	5	6
French Guiana	0	0	0	2
Gambia	0	0	1	14
Ghana	4	8	8	72
Guinea	0	0	0	3
Guinea/Bissau	0	0	1	0
Kenya	0	2	3	31
Liberia	1	1	1	3
Libya	0	0	3	8
Malawi	0	1	2	3
Mali	0	0	0	1
Mauritania	0	0	0	1
Mauritius	0	0	1	6
Morocco	9	0	2	19
Mozambique	0	0	0	1
Namibia	0	0	0	1
Nigeria	6	47	21	164
Rwanda	0	0	0	5
Sao Tome and Principe	0	0	0	1
Senegal	0	0	0	2
Seychelles	0	0	1	1
Sierra Leone	1	1	1	23
Somalia	1	1	20	102
South Africa	1	15	6	77
Sudan	0	1	3	8
Tanzania	0	0	0	4
Togo	0	1	1	3
Tunisia	0	0	0	5
Uganda	0	0	6	29
Zambia	1	1	1	7
Zimbabwe	0	1	17	24
Asia				
Bangladesh	2	1	15	88
Bhutan	0	0	0	1
China	0	3	3	52
Hong Kong	0	0	4	3
India	1	7	17	118
Indonesia	0	0	0	4
Japan	0	0	0	1
Korea Republic of (South)	0	2	0	5
Lao People's Dem Republic	0	0	1	0
Malaysia	0	0	2	4
Mongolia	0	0	0	1
Nepal	0	0	1	0
Pakistan	0	5	24	233
Philippines	1	1	2	10
Singapore	0	1	0	1
Sri Lanka	0	1	11	34
Surinam	0	1	0	2
Thailand	0	3	0	1
Vietnam	1	4	3	21
Central/South America				
Argentina	1	0	0	5
Bolivia	0	0	0	4
Brazil	0	8	0	14
Chile	0	1	1	14
Colombia	0	4	1	76
Costa Rica	0	1	0	1
Ecuador	0	0	0	2
Guatemala	0	0	0	1
Mexico	0	1	0	5
Nicaragua	0	0	0	1
Panama	0	0	0	2
Peru	0	1	0	4
Venezuela	0	5	0	28

Sentenced prisoners by length of sentence, nationality and gender—30 November 2003

	Females		Males	
	Less than 12 months	*12 months or more*	*Less than 12 months*	*12 months or more*
Europe				
Albania	0	0	12	24
Armenia	0	0	0	3
Austria	0	1	1	1
Belgium	0	2	5	19
Bosnia-Herzegovina	0	0	0	4
Bulgaria	0	1	2	1
Croatia	0	0	0	2
Cyprus	0	0	1	49
Czech Republic	1	0	2	9
Denmark	0	2	0	7
Estonia	0	0	2	1
Finland	0	0	0	1
France	0	11	7	54
Germany	0	15	3	61
Gibraltar	0	0	0	2
Greece	0	3	1	17
Hungary	0	0	0	11
Irish Republic	3	20	63	430
Italy	0	5	10	71
Latvia	0	1	2	5
Lithuania	0	1	4	16
Malta	0	1	2	10
Moldova	1	0	7	6
Netherlands	2	26	3	155
Norway	0	0	0	2
Poland	1	4	3	24
Portugal	0	8	18	55
Romania	0	7	12	22
Russian Federation	1	0	8	20
Serbia and Montenegro	1	1	10	45
Slovakia	0	0	1	3
Slovenia	0	0	0	3
Spain	0	15	4	56
Sweden	0	1	1	1
Switzerland	1	3	0	4
Turkey	2	0	12	143
Turkmenistan	0	0	1	0
United Kingdom	585	2,142	6,940	43,761
Uzbekistan	0	0	1	0
Middle East				
Afghanistan	0	0	8	19
Bahrain	0	0	0	1
Iran	2	0	10	37
Iraq	0	0	15	57
Israel	0	1	1	7
Jordan	0	0	0	3
Kuwait	0	0	1	0
Lebanon	0	1	1	10
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	6
Syrian Arab Republic	0	0	2	2
United Arab Emirates	0	1	0	5
Yemen	0	0	0	4
North America				
Canada	0	3	4	17
United States of America	2	18	3	49
Oceania				
Australia	1	2	4	18
French Southern Territories	0	0	0	2
Kiribati	0	0	0	1
New Zealand	0	2	0	6
Papua New Guinea	0	0	0	1

Sentenced prisoners by length of sentence, nationality and gender—30 November 2003

	Females		Males	
	Less than 12 months	*12 months or more*	*Less than 12 months*	*12 months or more*
West Indies				
Anguilla	0	0	0	1
Aruba	0	0	0	1
Bahamas	0	0	0	3
Barbados	0	2	0	21
Bermuda	0	0	0	1
Cuba	0	0	0	2
Dominica	0	0	2	4
Dominican Republic	0	1	1	7
Grenada	0	1	2	9
Guyana	0	3	2	11
Haiti	0	0	0	1
Jamaica	3	298	38	1,723
Montserrat	0	2	0	8
Netherlands Antilles	0	3	0	7
St. Christopher and Nevis	0	1	0	0
St. Kitts and Nevis	0	2	0	3
St. Lucia	0	0	1	14
St. Vincent and The Grenadines	0	0	1	3
Trinidad and Tobago	0	25	2	56
Virgin Islands	0	0	0	1
Not recorded	0	12	50	209

Proceeds of Crime Act 2002

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many reports of suspicious transactions reported to the National Criminal Intelligence Service since the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 came into effect have provided information related to the offence of bribery of a foreign public official. [151380]

Caroline Flint: Under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 reports on potential money laundering, known as 'Suspicious Activity Reports', are made to the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS). NCIS do not keep information on the types of offence underlying the reports, which will often only become clear following further investigation by the relevant law enforcement agencies. The information requested about the number of Suspicious Activity Reports made relating to the bribery of foreign officials is therefore not available.

Suspicious Activity Reports would only be one source of information on such matters. A member of staff of NCIS' International Division acts as the point of contact for the monitoring of all allegations of bribery of foreign officials.

Public Servants (Wrongdoing)

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what processes are available to public servants to raise concerns about serious wrongdoings by other public servants if they have reason to believe that their disclosure is in the public interest. [153740]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government established an arrangement under which Departments, including the Home Office and its agencies, nominate an official or officials outside line management to whom civil servants are able to report concerns in confidence, under the Civil Service Code.

The Civil Service Code in its current form was introduced with effect from 1 January 1996, and revised and re-issued in May 1999. It offers an independent line of appeal to the Civil Service Commissioners, where an individual feels that his/her concern has not received a reasonable response.

Recruitment Advertising

Miss Kirkbride:: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on recruitment advertisements in the press, broken down by publication, by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* quangos under the Department and *(c)* non-departmental Government bodies under the Department (i) in the last year and (ii) since 1997. [145803]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information about the total spend on recruitment advertisements for the Home Office, including the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, for the years 2000 701, 2001–02 and 2002–03 is shown in the table. Figures for the current year are not yet available.

The Home Office uses Job Centres and a wide variety of publications to advertise posts—including local, minority ethnic and the national press. A breakdown of the publications used could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office does not routinely collect information about the recruitment advertising costs for quangos or non-departmental government bodies under the Department.

Costs of recruitment advertising for the Home Office 2000–2003

	Spend on advertising (£)
Home Office (non-IND)	
2000–01	1,166,154
2001–02	826,056
2002–03	513,269

Costs of recruitment advertising for the Home Office 2000–2003

	Spend on advertising (£)
Immigration and Nationality Directorate	
2000–01	141,926
2001–02	519,610
2002–03	413,829
Total	
2000–01	1,308,080
2001–02	1,345,666
2002–03	927,098

Special Constables

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables there were in each London borough on 1 January of each of the last six years. [153076]

Ms Blears: There are no statistics published centrally on the number of Special Constables at local authority level or by Basic Command Unit. Statistics relating to the total number of Special Constables in the City of London and the Metropolitan Police District are given in the table.

Special Constable strength

Strength as at 31 March	London, City of	Metropolitan police	Total
1998	76	1,282	1,358
1999	64	1,138	1,202
2000	56	758	814
2001	43	774	817
2002	36	680	716
2003	42	692	734

All forces have been given funding for dedicated staff and initiatives to help implement good practice and recruit more Special Constables over the next 2–3 years. We are also running a national recruitment campaign, including television advertisements, starting on the 9 February, to coincide with the 2 National Specials Weekend on the 28–29 February.

Speed Cameras

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many motorists were banned from driving for a period as a result of being caught by *(a)* speed and *(b)* red light cameras in (i) 1997, (ii) 2000 and (iii) 2002. [153668]

Caroline Flint: Information for England and Wales for the years 1997 and 2000 is given in the table. 2002 data will be available in the spring.

Driving licence disqualifications[1] imposed at all courts for offences detected by camera, England and Wales, 1997 and 2000

	1997	2000
Speed offences[2]	675	1,417
Traffic light offences[3]	33	39

[1] Excludes persons disqualified under section 35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (penalty points system).
[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[3] Offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988 and The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1984.

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what differences there are in the calibration of speed cameras between police authority areas; and whether all authorities apply a 10 per cent. and 2 mph allowance over the speed limit before a fixed penalty or prosecution is initiated. [154474]

Caroline Flint: All cameras are required to detect and record the speed of passing vehicles within specified degrees of accuracy. Until July 2003 the standard was a positive error of no more than 3mph up to 100mph, and 3 per cent. above 100mph. The negative error was not greater than 5mph or 10 per cent. above 50mph. From July 2003, in line with European standards, new speed cameras will be required to be accurate to ± 2mph up to 66mph and ± 3 per cent. above 66mph. This has not yet been implemented for existing cameras, but we consider that all cameras are in fact already accurate to this level.

The enforcement of speed limits on the basis of information provided by the cameras is an operational matter for chief officers of police. The Association of Chief Police Officers has published guidelines on speed enforcement thresholds to support a transparent and consistent approach, while recognising that not all speeding offences are the same. The police retain discretion to take account of the particular circumstances of any particular speeding incident.

All police forces follow the guidelines, which are publicly available on the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) website (www.acpo.police.uk)

NORTHERN IRELAND

Paramilitary-style Assaults

7. **Mr. Luke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to eradicate paramilitary-style assaults on the civil population of Northern Ireland. [153161]

Jane Kennedy: The Government utterly condemn all paramilitary violence and acts of intimidation and remains resolute in its determination to see these brought to an end. We continue to call on those with influence over paramilitary groups to call a complete end to these barbaric attacks. This is also an area that the recently appointed Independent Monitoring Commission will regularly report on as part of their overall remit.

Parades Commission

8. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the work of the Parades Commission. [153162]

Jane Kennedy: The year 2003 witnessed the most peaceful marching season for some considerable time. I pay tribute to the Parades Commission who have played an important role in tackling the difficult task in considering and issuing determinations with regard to contentious parades.

Organised Crime Taskforce

9. **Mr. Borrow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the work of the Organised Crime Taskforce. [153163]

Jane Kennedy: The partner agencies of the Organised Crime Task Force continue to make a real impact in frustrating, disrupting and dismantling the organised crime gangs in Northern Ireland. Since 1 January 2004, the Police Service of Northern Ireland has seized cannabis valued at £2.75 million and Customs officers have seized 7 million contraband cigarettes.

11-Plus (Reform)

10. **Mr. Edwards:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the reform of the 11-plus in Northern Ireland. [153164]

Jane Kennedy: New post-primary arrangements in Northern Ireland will address the weaknesses of the current transfer and post-primary arrangements. They will put pupils at the centre, provide them with more relevant knowledge and skills needed for life and work in the 21st Century and raise standards for all.

Devolved Government

11. **Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in securing agreement to restore Devolved Government in Northern Ireland. [153165]

12. **Mr. Peter Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his negotiations with Northern Ireland political parties for the commencement of political institutions. [153166]

13. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the future of power sharing in the Province. [153167]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Member for East Londonderry, *Official Report,* column 1396.

Arms Decommissioning

14. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on arms decommissioning. [153168]

Jane Kennedy: To date there have been four acts of decommissioning carried out by paramilitary organisations, one by the Loyalist Volunteer Force and three by the Provisional IRA. The latest decommissioning act was carried out by the IRA on 21 October 2003. The arms comprised light, medium and heavy ordnance and associated munitions. They included automatic weapons, ammunition, explosives and explosive material. The quantity of arms involved was larger than the quantity put beyond use in the previous event.

Belfast City Airport

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has received an application from Belfast City airport to review the present operational planning agreement. [154126]

Angela Smith: Following the publication of the recommendations for Northern Ireland in the Government's White Paper, The Future of Air Transport, the Department of the Environment's Planning Service received a request from Belfast City airport on 19 January 2004 to review the form of the current planning agreement. This is now under consideration.

Domestic Violence

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with his colleagues in the Home Department in relation to the extension of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill to Northern Ireland. [153140]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The decision to extend certain provisions of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill to NI was taken following the Northern Ireland Office's consultation exercise on tackling domestic violence, "Tackling Violence at Home" which closed on 12 December. This consultation exercise revealed widespread public support for the domestic violence provisions which are being extended to Northern Ireland. In addition the Bill includes provisions relating to trial by jury of sample counts only, which had initially been intended for inclusion in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Both, my right hon. Friend the Member for Warley (Mr. Spellar), Minister of State with responsibility for Crinminal Justice matters and I have corresponded at length with the Home Secretary regarding the application of provisions to Northern Ireland. Throughout this process, both my officials have been in close contact with colleagues in the Home Office regarding policy development in respect of this Bill, in order to ensure that the people of Northern Ireland are afforded the same degree of protection as in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the terms were of the contract entered into between the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency and RoMaha for the PFI to upgrade MOT centres in Northern Ireland under project MOT2; and if he will make a statement on the implementation of the project. [154475]

Angela Smith: The contract entered into by the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency required the concessionaire, Romaha, to

"design, build, finance, install, maintain, repair and where necessary substitute and/or replace vehicle testing equipment and to provide all necessary training in respect of the operation of such equipment"

to meet current needs, and specified future needs in vehicle testing.

The contract, which was signed on 26 March 2001, called for promulgation of the project to all 15 Agency sites on a rolling basis over a two-year period. A plan was developed between the Agency and Romaha to ensure this was carried out effectively and to minimise disruption to the public. This plan included individual and overall timetables for completion. The contractor adhered rigidly to the timescale, and the rollout programme was completed on 19 September 2003.

Romaha provides a service against the contract for which DVTA pays an agreed unitary payment for this. Particularly poor performance can attract penalty points leading ultimately to contract termination, but the contractor's performance to date has attracted no penalty points. The parties are currently working to improve throughput, which is not yet at the anticipated level. The Agency is also working with the contractor to introduce a number of additional testing requirements catered for in the output specification.

Estate Wardens

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many estate wardens have been appointed by the Housing Executive in Northern Ireland to date; and for which areas. [152595]

Mr. Spellar: There are 52 staff in post, including one agency worker and there are four vacant posts distributed as follows:

Area	*Number*
Antrim	1
Armagh	[1]2
Ballymena	3
Banbridge	1
Bangor	2
Belfast Office 2	1
Belfast Office 7	[1]1
Belfast Offices (1, 3, 4, 5, and 6)	[2]10
Carrickfergus	1
Castlereagh	1
Coleraine	1
Cookstown	1
Downpatrick	1
Dungannon	2
Enniskillen (Fermanagh District Office)	1
L'Derry (Collon Tce., Waterloo Pl., Waterside)	5
Larne	1
Limavady	1
Lisburn (Antrim St. and Diary Farm)	[1]3
Lurgan/Brownlow	[1]1
Magherafelt	1
Newry	1
Newtownabbey Office 1 and 2	4
Newtownards	1
Omagh	1
Portadown	2
Strabane	2

[1] Plus one vacancy
[2] Two each

Homelessness

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases from ethnic minority backgrounds were identified by the Housing Executive as homeless on the grounds of intimidation in 2003; and in which geographical areas they were re-housed. [153600]

Mr. Spellar: During the 12 month period from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003 a total of 30 cases from ethnic minority backgrounds presented to the Housing Executive as homeless on grounds of intimidation. Of the 30 cases, 17 were accepted as homeless as a result of intimidation and eligible for housing assistance. Nine of these are either in temporary accommodation or have made their own arrangements for accommodation and eight were permanently re-housed in the following areas:

Belfast—4
Newry—2
Lisburn and North Down—1 each

The remaining 13 who presented as homeless either abandoned their application or were ineligible for assistance under immigration or homeless legislation.

Horseracing

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was paid in levy by bookmakers in Northern Ireland to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years; how much of that levy in each year was transferred to Horseracing Ireland; and how much Horseracing Ireland spent in each year in Northern Ireland. [153625]

Mr. Pearson: Charges paid by bookmakers in Northern Ireland to the Horse Racing Fund (which is controlled and managed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development) in each of the last three years were as follows:

	Amount (£)
2003	351,531
2002	354,083
2001	341,928

The Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 specifies to whom, and for what, payments may be made out of the Fund. Payments are not made to Horseracing Ireland. Horseracing Ireland is a body constituted in the Republic of Ireland. My Department is not aware of how much it spent in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years.

Hospital Waiting Times

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he is taking to reduce the number of patients who wait on a trolley longer than two hours for a hospital bed once they have been admitted to hospital. [154155]

Angela Smith: I am very aware of the current pressures on our hospital services, with some patients having to wait on trolleys before they can be admitted. During the time that patients wait on trolleys they receive all of the appropriate medical and nursing care that they need.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is taking forward a regional initiative to improve hospital admissions and patient flows through our hospitals. I am also working to increase capacity at key hospitals and by July 2004 the number of hospital beds will have increased by over 100 compared to the same time last year.

NHS Trusts (Working Time Directive)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action will be taken against NHS

trusts which fail to ensure their posts are compliant with the European Working Time Directive by August 2004. [154565]

Angela Smith: The European Working Time Directive is being introduced on a phased basis from August 2004 for doctors in training, and places a legal obligation on both employers and employees to comply with these regulations. All HPSS Boards and Trusts here are making significant efforts to put measures in place to achieve compliance with this Directive, as it currently stands, and my Department is continuing to increase the numbers of medical staffing in both consultant and training grades so that there is increased activity and improved patient care.

In recognition of the limiting effects of these regulations, the European Commission recently launched a public consultation across all member states on the implications of the Working Time Directive and subsequent rulings. This may lead to change in some of the requirements and, until the final requirements are clear, any action on failure to comply can not be determined at this stage.

Public Administration Review

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the timetable is for the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland. [153835]

Mr. Pearson: The current consultation exercise on the Review of Public Administration is due to end on 27 February 2004. I am discussing with the local political parties how best to progress the review after the end of the consultation period.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure that children with special educational needs have those needs met in the education sector in Northern Ireland. [152587]

Jane Kennedy: Some 10,600 pupils in Northern Ireland have statements of Special Educational Need (or attend Special Schools and are in the process of being statemented). The vast majority of these pupils have their Special Educational Needs (SEN) met within Northern Ireland. Currently there are only 34 pupils whose SEN are met outside Northern Ireland.

Most of these 34 pupils have sensory impairments or behavioural difficulties/autism and attend very specialist provision elsewhere to meet their needs, where the placements are in accordance with the wishes of the parents.

A Sub group of the Education and Library Boards' Regional Strategy Group for Special Education is currently considering the range of local provision required to meet the needs of hearing impaired pupils. The Department is represented on this Sub group.

The proposed Centre of Excellence for Autism in Middletown will aim to enhance local training for schools and teachers and educational intervention for pupils with autism.

Tennants Textiles Colours Plant

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the risks to the health and safety of the local community on the lower Ravenhill Road, Belfast arising from the continued operation of the Tennants Textiles Colours plant; what restrictions have been placed on future developments in the area; and if he will make a statement. [153834]

Mr. Pearson: The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) has conducted rigorous health and safety inspections of the Tennants Textiles Colours factory site to ensure compliance with the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (COMAH). These Regulations implement the European Community Directive 96/82/EC and require stringent controls on companies such as Tennants Textile Colours who store, use or handle specified dangerous substances above defined quantity thresholds.

The company has been fully co-operative in complying with the necessary safety requirements and as such, any risk to the health and safety of the local community on lower Ravenhill Road is considered to be minimal.

All future development proposals in the immediate vicinity of the site are subject to land-use assessment in accordance with UK wide land-use planning guidelines for COMAH sites. HSENI has determined planning consultation zones for the land surrounding the site and advises the Planning Service on proposed developments within these zones. HSENI advice is based on a consideration of the type of development, the status and number of occupants and its proposed location relative to the Tennants Textiles Colour site. In general, HSENI will advise the Planning Service against proposals for new developments that would introduce large or vulnerable populations to the immediate vicinity of the site. This approach, and the methodologies used are consistent across the United Kingdom.

Trading Standards

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the initial public response to the consumer line recently launched by Trading Standards. [153836]

Mr. Pearson: I am very pleased with the success to date of Consumerline, which went live on 3 November 2003. In the period from its commencement to 31 January 2004 it has dealt with more than 7,000 inquiries from the general public. This compares with 2,950 inquiries for the same period in 2002–03 under the previous advice service to consumers.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resources have been made available in Northern Ireland to assist the implementation of the Warm Homes Scheme in the past three years. [153847]

Mr. Spellar: The Warm Homes Scheme is funded by the Department for Social Development (DSD) but also benefits from a contribution from the Northern Ireland Electricity's (NIE) customer levy. The combined resources allocated during the last three years are as follows:

Financial year	*DSD (£)*	*NIE (£)*	*Total (£)*
2001–02	4,300,000	679,000	4,979,000
2002–03	7,952,000	1,670,000	9,622,000
2003–04	10,650,000	1,600,000	12,250,000

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Airwave Emergency Communications Network

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that local planning authorities follow planning guidance in determining applications for consent to build radio transmitters for the Airwave emergency communications network. [154348]

Keith Hill: Current planning guidance for all electronic communication developments is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8). It is for the local planning authority to decide whether to allow specific development to proceed. This will be done in the light of relevant planning policy guidance, the local development plan and any representations made to the authority. If anyone has a complaint about how the council has handled a planning matter or if anyone is dissatisfied by the council's response and thinks they have suffered an injustice, it is open to them to ask the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate whether there has been maladministration.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also published the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development on 11 November 2002. Arrangements to monitor the operation of the Code are being set up.

Decent Homes

Mr. Purchase: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that local authority housing departments rated at two stars and above have sufficient resources to meet the decency standard in a timely manner, where tenants vote to remain with their council landlord. [154026]

Keith Hill: All local authorities, regardless of performance, have four options that can be used singly or in combination to deliver the decent homes target. These are: retain the stock and use their existing resources to bring the stock up to the standard, or where a local authority requires additional resources it can choose from stock transfer, Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or setting up an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). For three of these (retention, ALMO, PFI) the council remains the landlord.

To secure additional resources through an ALMO they must be awarded two stars. There are no plans to provide additional resources to housing authorities with two stars or above outside of these options.

Mr. Purchase: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report,* column 748, when he expects that council houses remaining in the ownership and management of local authorities will meet the decency standard; and if he will make available the resources necessary to achieve his estimate. [154310]

Keith Hill: Local housing authorities that have not already taken advantage of stock transfer, Private Finance Initiative (PFI) or setting up an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) for all of their housing stock must complete an appraisal of the options available to deliver decent homes, including stock retention, by July 2005. Until this process is complete it will not be possible to state how many authorities will decide that stock retention in terms of ownership and management is the best option for delivering decent homes. Local authorities will only be able to choose this option if they have sufficient resources from mainstream housing funding to deliver by 2010. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to make additional resources available outside of the three additional investment options—stock transfer, PFI and ALMO.

Graffiti

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what strategies his Department has developed to encourage the removal of graffiti from *(a)* public and *(b)* private buildings; [153762]

(2) what new programmes for urban renewal include programmes to remove graffiti; [153761]

(3) what steps his Department takes to encourage local authorities to remove graffiti. [153760]

Keith Hill: Through "Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future", the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is investing £201 million to improve local liveability and create decent places. A key element of this supports action to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) including the removal of graffiti from public spaces and buildings. The cross Government liveability programme is also supported by the Home Office's 'together' national action plan on tackling ASB, which includes measures for tackling graffiti such as Shop 'em and Stop 'em projects.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also extending local authority powers to deal with environmental problems such as graffiti, fly-tipping and fly-posting. For example, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 includes powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for graffiti, enabling local authorities to issue such notices to people who commit 'minor' acts of graffiti and to allow all local authorities to retain income from Fixed Penalty Notices issued for graffiti for use in local environmental improvements. These measures will be introduced shortly.

Its up to private building owners to remove graffiti from their property, however local authorities can assist if necessary. The Home Office, through its 'together' action plan, will be piloting the use of new powers in 12 pilot areas, which will enable local authorities to charge back the cost of cleaning up street furniture to the owner.

In addition, by banning the sales of spray paints to under 16s we are trying to reduce the incidences of graffiti.

HMOs

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations his Department has received from *(a)* Universities UK and *(b)* individual vice chancellors about whether higher education halls of residence should fall within the scope of a mandatory houses in multiple occupation licensing scheme. [153139]

Keith Hill: In the 1999 Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) consultation representations were received from the following academic institutions supporting the proposal to exclude higher education halls of residence from the mandatory HMO licensing scheme: Universities UK, the Universities of Newcastle, Lancaster, Wales and the domestic bursars of Oxford Christ Church. Those who did not support the exemption included Sheffield, Manchester, North Staffordshire and Swansea.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* proportion of houses in multiple occupation which fall within the scope of the proposed mandatory licensing scheme within the Housing Bill. [153298]

Keith Hill: The Government estimate that about 120,000 Houses in Multiple Occupation will be subject to licensing under the mandatory scheme proposed in the Housing Bill. It is estimated that between 360,000 to 450,000 dwellings will be covered by the scheme.

Housing

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what standards have been established for the Government's plans for the redevelopment of the Thames Gateway in respect of *(a)* the residential density of new housing developments, *(b)* the proportion of development land that is expected to be previously-developed land, *(c)* design quality, *(d)* construction quality standards, *(e)* the accessibility of new housing to local amenities, *(f)* public transport accessibility and *(g)* the use of sustainable construction methods. [154043]

Keith Hill: For the Thames Gateway and elsewhere:

(a) (b) Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (PPG3) has introduced a series of tough new measures designed to meet the country's future housing needs in the most sustainable way possible. This includes a sequential approach which gives priority to re-using brownfield sites in urban areas in preference to developing Greenfield sites. In addition, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has a national target that, by 2008, 60 per cent. of additional housing should be provided on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings. One of the key features of the Thames Gateway as a suitable location for sustainable development is the presence of a substantial reservoir of brownfield land. In the period 1997–2000 an estimated 80 per cent. of new dwellings in the Gateway were built on previously developed land. The targeted investment now being mobilised through funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department for Transport, Regional Development Agencies aims to maintain this trend by increasing the viability and potential development density on key sites in the Gateway. PPG3 also encourages housing development that makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare) and seeks greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility.

(c) Planning Policy Guidance note 1 (PPG1) requires that

"good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and should be encouraged everywhere".

This policy is supported by our good practice guidance "By Design". *(d) (g)* all new homes have to comply with the requirements of the Building Regulations so that they are healthy, safe, energy efficient, and accessible by disabled people. In addition, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's increased funding for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) will allow it to provide greater support to delivering high quality, sustainable housing. CABE is establishing a Housing Quality Forum to disseminate best practice within the growth areas (including the Thames Gateway) and together with the House Builders Federation and Civic Trust has developed a Building for Life Standard to incentivise house builders to improve their product.

(e) (f) Government planning policy (in particular Planning Policy Guidance note 13) is to promote accessibility to local amenities by public transport, walking and cycling. In his statement on 30 July 2003, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister identified public transport infrastructure projects that are critical to supporting growth in the Thames Gateway. These included projects to improve strategic links within the Gateway through the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) and to improve public transport capacity and connections in major development locations through extensions to the Docklands Light Railway network and bus transit systems for East and South-East London and Kent Thameside. Since this statement, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has approved a consultation exercise by the Strategic Rail Authority on a proposed Integrated Kent Franchise that incorporates CTRL domestic services to Stratford and Ebbsfleet. An informal offer of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits to enable the Mayor to take forward the multi-modal Thames Gateway Bridge proposal has also been made.

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average residential density of housing developments given planning permission since March 2000 is in *(a)* Bexley, *(b)* Barking and Dagenham, *(c)* Greenwich, *(d)* Hackney, *(e)* Lewisham, *(f)* Newham, *(g)* Havering, *(h)* Tower Hamlets, *(i)* Waltham Forest, *(j)* Thurrock, *(k)* Basildon, *(l)* Castle Point, *(m)* Southend-on-Sea, *(n)* Rochford, *(o)* Medway, *(p)* Dartford, *(q)* Gravesham and *(r)* Swale local authority areas; and what the average residential density of such developments across all these boroughs is. [154191]

Keith Hill: Information relating to the average residential density of housing developments given planning permission in these local authorities since March 2000 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All Local Planning Authorities within the Thames Gateway and elsewhere,

are obliged to keep information relating to the determination of planning applications within their area of operation.

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what standards new housing to be built in communities envisaged in the Thames Gateway will be required to meet in respect of *(a)* schools, *(b)* health care facilities, *(c)* leisure facilities and *(d)* open spaces. [154192]

Keith Hill: For the Thames Gateway and elsewhere, Government planning policy (in particular Planning Policy Guidance 13) is to promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling.

In addition, the Social Exclusion Unit's "Making the Connections" report, published in February 2003, sets out a strategy to help people on low incomes access work, food shops and key public services, notably education and healthcare. This includes the approach of accessibility planning in those areas that produce a Local Transport Plan, where local transport planners and others work together to examine accessibility needs and how to overcome barriers. Accessibility planning is currently being piloted and various accessibility indicators are under consideration.

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the purpose is of merging housing associations within the Greater London area. [152978]

Keith Hill: This is a matter for the Housing Corporation but in general terms there are four sets of circumstances in which housing associations merge.

The first, and by far the most common, is where two or more associations conclude, of their own volition, that they can provide better or more services by coming together.

The second is where an association which is in breach of the Corporation's Regulatory Code concludes that the best or only way of resolving its problems is by joining another association with the necessary skills and resources.

The third is where, after a Statutory Inquiry has found mismanagement or misconduct in the affairs of the association, the Corporation's Board has the power to direct, with the consent of the Secretary of State, the association to transfer its land and property to another association of the Corporation's choosing.

In the event of an insolvency, the Corporation has the power to make proposals as to the future ownership and management of the land held by an RSL, which is designed to secure its continued proper management by another RSL. Any such proposals would have to be agreed by all the secured creditors.

Housing Stock Transfers

Mr. Purchase: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 748, if he will list *(a)* local authorities which have held ballots of tenants in the process of transferring stock to other ownership or management bodies and *(b)* those which have not. [154309]

Keith Hill: A ballot has been held for all Large Scale Voluntary Transfers of local housing stock to Registered Social Landlords. Details of the results in each case are on the housing transfer page of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. The table following shows the methods used by local authorities for measuring tenant support for Arms Length Management Organisations.

Methods used by local authorities for measuring tenant support for Arms Length Management Organisations

Operational ALMOs (i.e. Those who have received s.27 consent)	
Ballot held	
Round 1	Derby, Hounslow, Kirklees, Rochdale, Stockton-on-Tees
Round 2	Barnsley, Carrick, Colchester, Leeds East, Leeds North East, Leeds North West, Leeds South East, Leeds South, Leeds West, Waltham Forest
Round 3	High Peak, South Lakeland
Other test of opinion used	
Round 1	Ashfield, Westminster, Wigan
Round 2	Blyth Valley, Bolton, Brent, Cheltenham, Hillingdon, Kensington and Chelsea, Oldham, Salford (since withdrawn)
Round 3	Gateshead, Solihull, Warrington
Approved ALMOs but not yet operational (i.e. those awaiting s.27 consent)	
Ballot held	
Round 3	Camden (since withdrawn), Islington, Sheffield (partial)
Other test of opinion used	
Round 3	Barnet, Easington, Harrow, Newcastle, Poole
Current ALMO bids	
Ballot held	
Round 4	Hammersmith and Fulham
Ballot proposed	
Round 4	Nottingham, Sheffield (partial), Slough
Other test of opinion proposed	
Round 4	Bassetlaw, Brent (partial), Bury, Ealing, Eastbourne, Manchester (partial), Newark and Sherwood, Rotherham, Sandwell, Wolverhampton

Local Government Finance

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what methodology he used in his calculation that South Bucks District Council is receiving an increase of 3.4 per cent. in its grant for 2004–05. [154473]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister first calculated the amount of grant authorities would have received in 2003–04 on a like-for-like basis with 2004–05 i.e. the amount that an authority would have received had the transfers in funding and function relating to 2004–05 had occurred a year earlier. More detailed information on the calculation of the adjusted 2003–04 grant amounts can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0405/adipaps.pdf

The results of these calculations for South Bucks were as follows:

Adjusted 2003–04 redistributed business rates—£2,160,712

Adjusted 2003–04 Revenue Support Grant—£304,107

Adjusted 2003–04 Formula Grant—£2,464,819

The amount of grant authorities will receive in 2004–05 was then calculated in accordance with the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2004–05. The results of these calculations for South Bucks were as follows:

2004–05 redistributed business rates—£1,682,020

2004–05 Revenue Support Grant—£868,280

2004–05 Formula Grant—£2,550,300

The change in grant between 2004–05 and 2003–04 on a like-for-like basis was then calculated as follows:

2004–05 Formula Grant—Adjusted £2003–04 Formula Grant = £2,550,300–£2,464,819

£85,481 or 3.468 per cent.

Pathfinder Projects

Mr. Pike: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on progress of each of the housing renewal pathfinder projects. [154027]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has now announced funding for three pathfinders. These are £125 million for Manchester Salford in October 2003 and more recently £69 million (plus £4 million early wins money) for Newcastle Gateshead and £86 million (plus £4 million early wins money) for Merseyside. These three schemes are now tasked to deliver their proposals up to March 2006.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has now received strategic schemes from the South Yorkshire, East Lancashire and Oldham Rochdale pathfinders. These schemes are now being assessed by officials while being independently scrutinised by the Audit Commission. Negotiations on their proposals have commenced but it is not yet known when they will conclude. Strategic schemes from the remaining pathfinders are due in over the next few months with announcements following in due course.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to make an announcement on the Elevate Housing Renewal Pathfinder Project Programme Bid. [154029]

Keith Hill: Elevate East Lancashire's market renewal scheme was submitted on 31 December 2003. Negotiations with Elevate East Lancashire on its proposals have commenced but it is not yet known when they will conclude.

Phone Masts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many phone masts there are in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley; and how many are shared between operators in each of those areas. [153718]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, during September and October every year the mobile network operators write to every local authority with details of their network rollout for the year ahead. When they write to the local authority they also provide details of their existing sites within the local authority area. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the network operators for copies of their plans.

Regional Government

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on devolved government in the regions. [154386]

Mr. Raynsford: In the 2001 Manifesto the Government made a commitment that provision should be made for directly elected regional government to go ahead in regions where people decided in a referendum to support it and where predominantly unitary local government is established.

The Government's proposals for establishing elected assemblies in those English regions that want them, and for improving existing arrangements in all regions, were set out in "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions (CMS511)" which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published in May 2002.

The Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 provides for referendums and associated local government reviews. My right Hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced in June 2003, following a soundings exercise, that the north-east, north-west, and Yorkshire and the Humber regions would be the first regions to progress towards a referendum for an elected assembly. Local Government reviews are under way in those regions. When the Boundary Committee have presented their recommendations orders in Parliament for referendums will be laid.

If there is a "yes" vote, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will need to introduce further legislation to provide for assemblies to be established. The first assemblies could be up and running early in the next Parliament.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the establishment of referendums for regional government. [154387]

Mr. Raynsford: The Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 provides for referendums on whether to establish an elected assembly and for associated local government reviews on options for local government restructuring.

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced in June 2003, following a soundings exercise, that the north-east, north-west, and Yorkshire and Humberside would be the first regions to progress towards holding a referendum for a regional assembly. Local government reviews are underway in these regions. When the Boundary Committee have presented their recommendations, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will lay orders in Parliament enabling referendums to take place.

Mr Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent by the Department on *(a)* research and *(b)* preparation for regional referendums on devolved government. [154388]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not spent any money on research on regional referendums. Some staff time has been spent on developing policy and preparing Statutory Instruments related to the referendums.

The cost of designing, printing and disseminating the results of the soundings exercise, that established which regions had an interest in holding a referendum, was £2,500 plus some staff costs. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will spend £500,000 in this financial year, on an information campaign about elected regional assemblies in the three northern regions.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost of running a regional referendum. [154390]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government are currently consulting on The Regional Assembly and Local Government Referendums (Counting Officers' Charges) (England) Order 2004, that will establish the costs of conducting the referendums. The cost will vary from region to region, depending on the size of the region, electorate, and level of turnout.

Based on the figures in the draft order the cost of holding a referendum will be £1.47 per elector, if everyone eligible votes.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department has a special unit to organise and operate referendums. [154391]

Mr. Raynsford: The Electoral Commission is responsible for the organisation and operation of the regional referendums.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not therefore have a special unit to carry out these functions. However, some staff time has been spent on developing policy and preparing Statutory Instruments related to the referendums.

Mr Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans that regional assemblies would be able to levy taxes. [154393]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister stated in the White Paper, "Your Region, Your Choice" (Cm 5511) that an elected assembly will be able to raise money from a precept on the council tax. It will not be able to levy other taxes, including varying non-domestic rates or business taxes.

Sellers Packs

Claire Ward: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress is being made on the introduction of a seller's pack for house buyers. [153604]

Keith Hill: The Housing Bill, which provides for the introduction of home information packs, is currently before Standing Committee E in the House. Earlier this month the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published the findings of consumer and technical pilots of the Home Condition Report, summaries of the responses received to the consultation papers on the contents of the pack and how the pack should operate in low demand areas and research showing a potential labour force of between 10 to 18,000 people who could become home inspectors. Several Universities and colleges are already preparing courses for Home Inspectors. Following discussions with the industry the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has concluded that 1 January 2007 is an appropriate date to aim to introduce home information packs. This will send a clear message to our industry partners as to what needs to be done.

Sustainable Procurement

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines his Department gives to local authorities on sustainable procurement. [153806]

Mr. Raynsford: The National Procurement Strategy for Local Government, jointly published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association (LGA) in October 2003, encourages councils to achieve better value for money through effective and innovative procurement over the next three years. Among other things, it encourages councils to build sustainability into procurement strategies, processes and contracts. The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) has published guidance on sustainability and local government procurement, aimed specifically at councils' needs in this area.

Thames Gateway (Housing)

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of whether the scale of the development which it foresees in the Thames Gateway can be accommodated on previously developed brownfield sites. [153584]

Keith Hill: One of the key features of the Gateway as a suitable location for sustainable development is the presence of a substantial reservoir of previously developed and brownfield land. The Gateway is estimated to contain some 2 per cent. of the land area of

the south east but contains 17 per cent. of its current supply of previously developed land. The national target for development on previously developed land is 60 per cent.: in the period 1997–2000 an estimated 80 per cent. of new dwellings in the Gateway were built on previously developed land. The targeted investment now being mobilised through funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Department for Transport and Regional Development Agencies aim to maintain this trend by increasing the viability and potential development density on key sites in the Gateway.

The scale of development we have projected for the Gateway is based upon work with local partners on the presence and pattern of suitable development land. Details will be determined through the reviews of Regional Plans which is being undertaken by the three Regional Planning Bodies which cover the Gateway.

Thurrock Urban Development Corporation

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what new settlements are proposed within the Thurrock Urban Development Corporation area pursuant to paragraph 24 of Sustainable Communities: an Urban Development Corporation for Thurrock. [153858]

Keith Hill: Issues relating to new settlements and related housing growth in Thurrock are currently determined by Regional Planning Guidance 9 and are set out within Thurrock Council's Local Plan, as adopted in September 1997.

The East of England Regional Assembly is currently in the process of preparing new Regional Planning Guidance for the East of England (RPG14). This will contain housing growth targets for all local authority areas within the region, including Thurrock.

As the plan making body for Thurrock, it will be for the Council to interpret the requirements of RPG14 and to determine the location(s) and the manner in which housing growth will be accommodated in the borough.

CABINET OFFICE

SI No. 440

John Mann: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the impact of Statutory Instrument No.440. [152248]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

No formal assessment has been made. However, no accidents or delays were reported on the mainline carriageway of side roads during the works carried out under SI No. 440.

HEALTH

Adverse Drug Reactions

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the percentage of NHS prescriptions involved in adverse drug reactions in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [152813]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data are not available to allow estimation of the percentage of national health service prescriptions which involved adverse drug reactions in the last year. Reports of suspected adverse drug reactions are collected by the Committee on Safety of Medicines/Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency through the spontaneous reporting scheme, the Yellow Card Scheme. The main purpose of the scheme is to identify new drug safety hazards and not to quantify their incidence.

Ambulance Services

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the need for regulation of private ambulance services to reflect practice in the NHS. [153748]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have encouraged self-regulation of private ambulance services and have made it clear to national health service organisations that, if they are using private ambulance companies, they must satisfy themselves that the organisation has suitably trained staff for the task and conforms to legal and other relevant standards.

The use of private ambulance services in the NHS is covered by a code of practice issued in 1993 (EL(93)109).

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the training requirements are for *(a)* paramedics and *(b)* ambulance technicians in (i) the NHS and (ii) private ambulance services. [153749]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Although training courses are delivered locally, paramedics and technicians employed by national health service ambulance services are trained in accordance with a national syllabus administered on behalf of the Department by the Ambulance Service Association and based on clinical advice from the Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee.

To qualify, they are also required to sit nationally set examinations with awards administered by Edexel on behalf of the Ambulance Service Association.

To practise, paramedics have additionally to register and meet standards approved by the Health Professions Council.

Training in private ambulance services is a matter for each individual employer. Each has a general duty to ensure that its staff are suitably qualified and trained in order to provide the level of care which they are required to deliver. If private ambulance services are employed by the NHS, guidance to trusts requires that they satisfy themselves that the contractor's staff are suitably trained and experienced.

Audiology

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress has been made in reducing the number of analogue hearing aids used by NHS patients in *(a)* North West Leicestershire and *(b)* the East Midlands since January 2002; [153721]

(2) what progress is being made in the provision of NHS digital hearing aids in *(a)* North West Leicestershire and *(b)* the East Midlands. [153722]

Dr. Ladyman: Details of those audiology services that have been modernised are available in the Library. There are no plans to monitor the reduction in the number of people using analogue aids.

I refer my hon. Friend to the response given to the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope) on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 176W.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when digital hearing aids will be freely available on the NHS for residents of *(a)* Taunton Deane and *(b)* West Somerset. [154186]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* Digital hearing aids are already available on the national health service for residents of Taunton Deane and West Somerset. A small number of digital hearing aids were made available in January 2004. However, the audiology department at the Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust will begin rolling out digital hearing aids comprehensively in March 2004 when 1,000 existing analogue users will start converting to digital technology.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients are waiting for a hearing aid assessment in the *(a)* Taunton Deane and *(b)* Somerset Coast Primary Care Trust area. [154187]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* This information is not centrally held.

Children's Respite Care

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust gave to projects dealing with children's respite care in 2003. [153490]

Dr. Ladyman: During 2002–03, the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust (PCT) provided recurrent funding of £11,000 to Derian House Hospice. In addition, the PCT has also agreed to provide funding to the Chorley and South Ribble Crossroads Care scheme. £6,760 will be provided annually for three years and will help to employ three care attendants to work specifically with young adults with mental health needs, learning difficulties or physical difficulties which prevent them taking part in usual social activities with their peers. This scheme currently supports nine families.

Audited accounts are not yet available for 2003–04.

Cisapride

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will conduct an investigation into the safety of the drug cisapride. [153258]

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department made of the impact of the drug cisapride before its withdrawal in the United Kingdom. [153754]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2000, the former Medicines Control Agency (now the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) and the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) conducted a thorough review of the balance of risks and benefits of cisapride (Prepulsid, licensed for the treatment of motility-related gastrointestinal disorders). As cisapride was also authorised in other European Union (EU) Member States, a safety review by the European Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products (CPMP) was also taken forward at this time.

Following careful review of efficacy studies and consideration of reports of suspected cardiac adverse reactions, the CSM concluded that the balance of risks and benefits for cisapride was no longer favourable and the Licensing Authority suspended the UK marketing authorisations (MAs) pending the outcome of the EU review. Following an opinion of the CPMP, the European Commission issued a Decision in May 2002 allowing restricted MAs for cisapride for use in certain indications in clinical trials or via a safety registry.

However, the UK MAs remained suspended until 17 October 2003 when the company, Janssen Cilag, cancelled them.

Consultants

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the New Consultant Entry Scheme; and whether doctors on the Scheme count as consultants for the sake of the NHS Plan consultant recruitment targets. [152819]

Mr. Hutton: The New Consultant Entry Scheme (NCES) has been developed for specialist registrars who have recently acquired the certificate of completion of specialist training and would like more practical support to help make the transition to consultant grade in their first consultant post. Placements are for six months in vacant consultant posts, after which the doctors can apply for substantive appointment in open competition.

Appointments of NCES doctors to consultant vacancies are counted for the purposes of consultant recruitment targets.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* headcount and *(b)* whole-time equivalent figures are for dentists for each year since 1996 for (i) England, (ii) each NHS region and (iii) each strategic health authority. [150810]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information on the number of national health service dentists on a headcount basis in each region of England and by strategic health authority (SHA) at September each year from 1996 to 2002 is shown in the table.

Information is not available on a whole-time equivalent (wte) basis because general dental service dentists are self employed dentists who do not work standard hours and who are able to vary their hours and their NHS commitment.

NHS dentists cover dentists working in the general dental service (GDS), hospital dental service (HDS), community dental service (CDS), personal dental service (PDS) and salaried service of the GDS. Dentists working in more than one dental service are included in each service apart from dentists working in both PDS and GDS who are counted in the GDS only.

Information for 2003 on all NHS dentists is not yet available.

National Health Service: Number of dentists in England by region and Strategic Health Authority at September each year

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
England	19,980	20,483	21,041	21,556	21,902	22,438	22,810
NHS Region							
Northern and Yorkshire	2,401	2,477	2,540	2,558	89	2,668	—
Trent	1,749	1,799	1,820	1,900	1,915	1,918	—
West Midlands	1,895	1,938	1,982	1,998	2,058	2,134	—
North West	2,740	2,777	2,846	2,900	2,887	2,929	—
Eastern	1,961	2,050	2,110	2,206	2,259	2,329	—
London	3,633	3,680	3,807	3,821	3,875	3,967	—
South East	3,538	3,627	3,683	3,840	3,915	4,033	—
South and West	2,063	2,135	2,253	2,333	2,404	2,460	—
Strategic Health Authority							
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	943	983	1,043	1,084	1,096	1,115	1,114
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	634	648	684	729	748	801	803
Birmingham and The Black Country	891	909	918	910	924	965	964
Cheshire and Merseyside	1,010	1,045	1,070	1,089	1,093	1,107	1,161
County Durham and Tees Valley	383	413	425	422	422	436	455
Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire	549	564	584	597	622	636	664
Cumbria and Lancashire	738	742	776	773	760	797	787
Dorset and Somerset	466	475	494	500	520	519	540
Essex	557	577	579	599	621	627	625
Greater Manchester	1,122	1,115	1,127	1,162	1,155	1,149	1,161
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	681	685	704	735	762	793	800
Kent and Medway	641	664	654	679	668	663	686
Leicestershire, Northants and Rutland	491	504	517	523	519	524	541
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	770	825	847	878	890	901	941
North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire	573	584	592	611	632	664	671
North Central London	696	730	750	767	755	768	765

National Health Service: Number of dentists in England by region and Strategic Health Authority at September each year

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
North East London	575	568	579	605	632	673	626
North West London	935	947	1,012	992	1,000	998	978
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	584	594	616	635	655	645	688
Shropshire and Staffordshire	455	465	480	491	512	533	551
South East London	810	788	798	768	809	811	800
South West London	617	647	668	689	679	716	707
South West Peninsula	654	677	716	749	788	826	834
South Yorkshire	519	537	522	547	558	553	578
Surrey and Sussex	1,191	1,208	1,222	1,250	1,297	1,350	1,387
Thames Valley	832	875	902	971	989	1,029	1,069
Trent	839	854	886	933	942	941	990
West Yorkshire	824	860	876	868	854	898	924

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many whole-time equivalent NHS dentists there were per head of population *(a)* in total and *(b)* offering NHS treatment in (i) England and (ii) each strategic health authority in each year since 1997. [151464]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The available information is for the number of national health service dentists (headcount) per 10,000 population and is shown in the table for September in each of the years 1997 to 2002.

NHS dentists cover dentists working in the general dental service (GDS), hospital dental service (HDS), community dental service (CDS), personal dental service (PDS) and salaried service of the GDS.

Dentists working in more than one dental service are included in each service, apart from dentists working in both PDS and GDS, who are counted in the GDS only. Information for 2003 is not yet available.

Information on a whole time equivalent basis is not available, as dentists working in the GDS are able to vary the amount of hours they work and to vary their NHS commitment. The majority of dentists working in the GDS do some NHS work.

National health service: number of dentists per 10,000 population in England by strategic health authority for September each year

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
England	4.22	4.32	4.41	4.47	4.54	4.60
Strategic health authority						
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	4.64	4.90	5.05	5.08	5.15	5.13
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	4.16	4.36	4.60	4.70	4.99	5.00
Birmingham and the Black Country	3.98	4.03	4.01	4.09	4.26	4.24
Cheshire and Merseyside	4.42	4.53	4.63	4.65	4.71	4.95
County Durham and Tees Valley	3.61	3.72	3.71	3.72	3.85	4.02
Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcester	3.75	3.87	3.94	4.10	4.17	4.31
Cumbria and Lancashire	3.90	4.08	4.07	4.00	4.18	4.12
Dorset and Somerset	4.07	4.22	4.25	4.39	4.35	4.50
Essex	3.65	3.65	3.75	3.86	3.88	3.85
Greater Manchester	4.40	4.45	4.61	4.58	4.57	4.62
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	3.92	4.01	4.16	4.30	4.45	4.47
Kent and Medway	4.29	4.21	4.34	4.24	4.19	4.32
Leicester, Northants And Rutland	3.31	3.38	3.40	3.36	3.36	3.44
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	3.87	3.94	4.07	4.09	4.13	4.29
North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire	3.64	3.69	3.80	3.92	4.10	4.13
North Central London	6.43	6.58	6.65	6.48	6.39	6.29
North East London	3.94	3.98	4.11	4.26	4.42	4.07
North West London	5.73	6.08	5.89	5.86	5.64	5.48
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	4.21	4.39	4.55	4.72	4.66	4.98
Shropshire and Staffordshire	3.15	3.24	3.31	3.45	3.58	3.69
South East London	5.44	5.48	5.23	5.47	5.36	5.28
South West London	5.19	5.33	5.46	5.35	5.51	5.42
South West Peninsula	4.41	4.64	4.82	5.02	5.23	5.25
South Yorkshire	4.20	4.10	4.31	4.40	4.37	4.56
Surrey and Sussex	4.83	4.86	4.92	5.09	5.28	5.42
Thames Valley	4.26	4.37	4.67	4.74	4.90	5.09
Trent	3.34	3.45	3.63	3.65	3.59	3.75
West Yorkshire	4.16	4.23	4.20	4.13	4.31	4.42

Note:

Population data are based on 2001 census mid-year estimates.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the gender breakdown of NHS dentists was in each year since 1997; and what the gender breakdown is of dentists in training. [151465]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information in Table 1 shows the number of female and male national health service dentists on a head count basis for England at September each year from 1997 to 2003.

NHS dentists cover dentists working in the general dental service (GDS), hospital dental service (HDS), community dental service (CDS) and personal dental service (PDS). Dentists working in more than one dental service are included in each service apart from dentists working in both PDS and GDS who are counted in the GDS only. Excluded are the small number of salaried dentists in the GDS.

Information on CDS and HDS for September 2003 is not currently available.

Information on the gender breakdown of vocational trainees in the GDS is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: National health service—Number of dentists by gender at 30 September each year, England

	General dental service		*Personal dental service*		*Community dental service*		*Hospital dental service*		*Total*	
	Female	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*
1997	4,640	12,088	—	—	881	498	683	1,505	6,204	14,091
1998	4,940	12,307	—	—	888	497	704	1,521	6,532	14,325
1999	5,224	12,497	44	39	876	492	709	1,539	6,853	14,567
2000	5,444	12,605	103	89	866	477	711	1,476	7,124	14,647
2001	5,670	12,684	273	194	877	471	730	1,454	7,550	14,803
2002	5,758	12,642	376	280	922	509	759	1,464	7,815	14,895
2003	5,930	12,607	467	335	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note:
PDS numbers exclude dentists who also work in the GDS. Female and male numbers for 1999 are estimated. PDS started in October 1998.
Source:
Dental Practice Board and Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Table 2: General dental service—Number of vocational dental practitioners by gender at 30 September each year, England

Gender	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
All dentists	532	563	584	612	658	589	576
Female	268	282	279	320	342	303	281
Male	264	281	305	292	316	286	295

Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what grades of staff he proposes to remove from each Directorate of the establishment of the Department; and how many posts will remain in each. [152823]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is restructuring 14 directorates into three business groups. By October 2004, the numbers of posts per business group will be:

Health and Social Care Standards and Quality: 804

Health and Social Care Delivery: 626

Strategy and Business Development: 815

The Department's headcount in November 2003 was 3,631. The reduction to 2,245 posts will be achieved through a combination of transfers to partner organisations, natural wastage and managed exits. The numbers and grade of staff falling into each of those categories and from which of the three business groups is not yet known.

Desmopressin

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prescription items of desmopressin there were in each *(a)* NHS region and *(b)* strategic health authority in each of the last five years, broken down by age. [152826]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of prescription items of desmopressin dispensed by strategic health authority has been placed in the Library. Comparable data at this level are only available from 2001.

Doctors

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of doctors in England who have passed their Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board examination but are unable to find a job in the NHS; and if he will make a statement. [152834]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not collected centrally by the Department. However, recent analysis in January 2004 by the General Medical Council shows that, of the doctors who passed the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board exams in 2002, 90 per cent. have gone on to take up a period of limited registration.

Domiciliary Care

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the availability of care packages for maintaining elderly people in their own homes. [153820]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the estimated number of adults aged 65 and over receiving community based services in England for the years 2000–01 to 2002–03. Community based services includes day care, meals, respite care, direct payments, professional support, transport and equipment as well as home care.

Estimated number of adults aged 65 and over receiving community based services[1] in England 2000–01 to 2002–03

	Rounded number
2000–01	925,000
2001–02	972,000
2002–03[2]	988,000

[1] Community based services includes day care, meals, respite care, direct payments, professional support, transport and equipment as well as home care.
[2] The 2002–03 data excludes about 1,000 clients formerly in the receipt of preserved rights i.e. clients who were formally in receipt of higher rates of income under the DWP preserved rights scheme.
Source:
RAP form PI.

East Surrey Hospital

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the Royal College of Psychiatrists inspected the accident and emergency department at the East Surrey hospital; what its recommendations were; and when he expects the recommendations to be implemented; [152469]

(2) what his assessment is of the safety of the accident and emergency department at the East Surrey hospital for members of the public *(a)* in the period following the inspection of the department by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and *(b)* following the instruction of 30 December 2003 of the clinical tutor to junior psychiatric doctors to cease attending patients at the department. [152470]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* The recommendations made by the Royal College of Psychiatrists are as follows:

Consideration should be given to the re-siting of the on-call accommodation from West Park to the Epsom Hospital site.

The reduction in the number of outpatient clinics in post number RPU/13/052/5/001 should be considered.

Community visits should form an integral part of all general adult training posts.

The tutor at Epsom Hospital should sit on the hospital library committee.

Increased consultant support to the in-house educational activities is recommended.

The protocol for access to the Meadows Unit after 5 p.m. should be reviewed.

Consideration should be given to the development of a senior house officer post in child and adolescent psychiatry at East Surrey.

The training scheme at East Surrey Hospital was approved for four years following this assessment.

I understand from the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority that Surrey Oaklands National Health Service Trust has acted in accordance with the mandatory requirements and responded to the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

All NHS trusts have a statutory responsibility to ensure that their premises are safe for staff, and patients. I understand that a new accident and emergency psychiatric assessment room is planned for completion by end of February but in the interim an alternative room has been provided. This area has been assessed and endorsed by the chief executive of the trust as meeting safety requirements.

Elder Abuse

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to tackle abuse of the elderly. [153818]

Dr. Ladyman: The abuse of vulnerable adults is of huge concern to the Government. The Government launched guidance titled "No Secrets" in March 2000, which required local councils and other authorities to develop their own locally based procedures to prevent vulnerable adult abuse. Directors of social services had to ensure that local multi-agency codes of practice were developed and implemented by 31 October 2001. In June this year the Government intend to introduce the Protection of Vulnerable Adults list, which in practice amounts to a workforce ban on those who have abused or mistreated vulnerable adults in their care.

Foundation Trusts

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance has been issued to applicant NHS foundation trusts on who should be installed on the electoral register for the board of governors; and when it was issued. [153001]

Mr. Hutton: Schedule 1, paragraph 3 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 sets out the eligibility requirements for membership of national health service foundation trusts. Anyone who is registered as a member of a particular constituency or class will be eligible to vote in elections for governors in that constituency or class. NHS foundation trusts must make provision in their constitution for the conduct of elections to the board of governors. Department of Health guidance to first wave applicants recommends the point at which the electoral register is closed for electoral purposes. This guidance was issued in January.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether political parties will be permitted to contest elections to the board of governors of NHS foundation trusts. [153002]

Mr. Hutton: The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 provides that anyone who is registered as a member of a particular constituency or class will be eligible to be nominated to stand for election in that constituency or class. The legislation sets out a limited number of exclusions and trust constitutions may include other limited exclusions consistent with the legislation. national health service foundation trusts must make provision in their constitution for the conduct of elections to the board of governors. This may include provisions on the requirements for nominations, and the declaration of interests of nominated candidates. Departmental guidance to first wave applicants recommends that individuals nominated to stand for election as governors should be required to declare if they are members of a political party.

Gallstones and Kidney Stones

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have required surgery for the treatment of *(a)* gallstones and *(b)* kidney stones in each of the past five years. [152923]

Mr. Hutton: The table shows data relating to the number of operations carried out for the treatment of gallstones and kidney stones from 1998–99 to 2002–03.

Operations for treatment of gallstones and kidney stones in NHS trusts in England

	Procedure	
	Gallstones	*Kidney stones*
1998–99	35,754	21,323
1999–2000	36,457	21,290
2000–01	39,090	21,445
2001–02	40,127	20,725
2002–03	43,679	21,293

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Child/Adolescent Mental Health Services

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the adequacy of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provision in England. [154632]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department conducts annual surveys of the range of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) available in England. The first of these took place in autumn 2002 and represents the latest data available. I have arranged for a copy of the document that summarises the results of this survey to be placed in the Library.

The survey did reveal some geographical disparities in CAMHS provision which reinforce the need to press ahead with the Department's objectives of attaining year-on-year increases in CAMHS provision of a minimum of 10 per cent. leading to a comprehensive CAMHS in all areas by 2006. Investment of £250 million over three years is being made to help achieve this.

Group B Streptococcus

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what figures his Department has collated on the number of cases of Group B Streptococcus in each of the last five years. [153422]

Dr. Ladyman: Figures on the number of finished consultant episodes (FCEs) of Group B Streptococcus in each of the last five years is shown in the table.

	FCEs
1998–99	3,208
1999–2000	4,057
2000–01	5,513
2001–02	5,822
2002–03	7,137

Notes:
1. An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
2. All Diagnosis count of Episodes—these figures represent a count of all FCEs where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in an HES record. A record is only included once in each count, even if a diagnosis is mentioned in more than one diagnosis field of the record.
3. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data. Except for 2001–02 and 2002–03, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.
4. Data Quality—Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) are compiled from data sent by over 300 NHS trusts and primary care trusts (PCTs) in England. The Department of Health liaise closely with these organisations to ensure that data quality is enhanced wherever possible. Inevitably, some shortcomings remain, but our goal is to minimise inaccuracies and bring about improvement over time.

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Information Technology

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the scope of the NHS National IT programme is in relation to *(a)* social services departments and *(b)* pharmacists; and if he will make a statement. [152812]

Mr. Hutton: The key objective of the National Programme for Information Technology (NPfIT) in the national health service in England is to support, over time, the delivery of integrated health and social care by enabling appropriate access to records and improved storage, sharing and management of core data.

NPfIT is responsible for introducing the NHS Care Record Service (NHS CRS), which will firstly lead to the NHS having an integrated electronic record management service. The NHS CRS will provide each patient with a single comprehensive set of electronic medical and care notes.

Local practices and hospitals will continue to hold detailed local records, but additionally a summary health record will be created containing essential data such as allergies, current treatments or medication.

From the outset some elements of social care information will be included and, provided that the necessary security and networking requirements are met, some social care professionals will have access to the NHS CRS. Full implementation of a unified health record that includes all appropriate social care information is planned for completion during phase 3 of the NPfIT in 2008–10.

We have redefined the scope of the electronic transmission of prescriptions (ETP) programme in order to support the wider pharmacy agenda. This potentially offers greater benefit. For example, in terms of patient safety, there will be better information at the points of prescribing and dispensing. It will enable us to make better use of pharmacists' skills and use them to provide patient centred healthcare services that are integral to the NHS.

The ETP programme will enable the commitments made in "Delivering 21st Century IT" be taken forward and will provide support for the broader pharmacy agenda outlined in "Pharmacy in the Future" and "A Vision for Pharmacy in the New NHS".

The programme will also help to build capacity at the Prescription Pricing Authority, thereby enabling the projected increase in prescription volumes to be addressed. It will also potentially reduce the unit cost of administering prescriptions.

Key elements of the electronic transmission of prescriptions system have been procured as part of the recently concluded NHS CRS procurements. Work is now focusing on how community pharmacies can be connected to the system, and how their pharmacy computer systems can be upgraded to comply with the requisite technical specification. It is intended that deployment of the live system will commence from January 2005.

Joint Replacements

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* hip and *(b)* knee replacements paid for out of NHS funds were performed in (i) the public sector and (ii) the private sector in each year since 1999, broken down by hospital trust; and if he will make a statement. [152764]

Mr. Hutton: The Department of Health records activity in national health service hospitals only and does not collect data for NHS activity in private hospitals.

Information on the number of hip and knee replacement operations carried out broken down by individual NHS hospitals in each year since 1999–2000, has been placed in the Library.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost per operation was for *(a)* hip and *(b)* knee replacements in each hospital trust in financial year 1999–2000; and if he will make a statement. [152765]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been placed in Library. The table contains the average unit costs (per operation) for each national health service trust in England for primary hip replacements and primary knee replacements where the operation is undertaken as an elective (planned) admission.

The data source is the Reference Costs 2000 Publication, relating to the financial year 1999–2000.

Calculation of the costs provided are based on all activity and costs associated with each procedure, regardless of the specialty in which the activity is recorded.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the data will be made available for the financial year 2002–03 for the cost per operation of *(a)* hip and *(b)* knee replacements in each hospital trust; and if he will make a statement. [152766]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been placed in Library. The table contains the average unit costs (per operation) for each national health service trust in England for primary hip replacements and primary knee replacements where the operation is undertaken as an elective (planned) admission.

The data source is the Reference Costs 2003 Collection, relating to the financial year 2002–03, published on 5 February.

Calculation of the costs provided is based on all activity and costs associated with each procedure, regardless of the specialty in which the activity is recorded. The costs relate solely to services provided to NHS patient by NHS providers.

Junior Doctors

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what circumstances junior doctors, changing hospitals as part of their normal rotation, can receive substantial pay cuts; and if he will list the London hospitals where this takes place. [R] [153427]

Mr. Hutton: Junior doctors do not receive pay cuts as part of their normal rotation (and therefore, as this does not take place in any London hospital, no data are available).

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will visit Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital to discuss *(a)* the management and *(b)* salary payments of junior doctors on rotation there; [R] [153426]

(2) if he will investigate junior doctors' hours monitoring at Great Ormond Street Hospital in the department of neurosurgery. [R] [153416]

Mr. Hutton: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no plans to visit Great Ormond Street in the near future.

National health service trusts are responsible for ensuring that appropriate rotation and salary arrangements are in place for junior doctors in line with national guidance.

Under those arrangements, there is regular monitoring to ensure that rotas are satisfactory, that junior doctors' hours are within agreed limits and that safe services are provided.

Great Ormond Street has these arrangements in place, and policies and procedures under which any concerns can be raised and addressed.

NHS Estates

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reason the deal to sell NHS Estates surplus properties and inventures to the HBOS/Miller Consortium has not yet been completed; and when he expects completion; [147753]

(2) which sites initially identified in the proposed sale of NHS Estates surplus properties with inventures to the HBOS/Miller consortium are now not to be included. [147755]

Mr. Hutton: Commercially confidential discussions with Miller/HBOS are still taking place and an announcement should be made shortly.

NHS Professionals

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons NHS Professionals does not use agency staff supplied to it through arrangements with private agencies who have previously registered with NHS Professionals; and what estimate NHS Professionals has made of the number of staff who have been declined in this way. [152991]

Mr. Hutton: The NHS Professionals Special Health Authority works in partnership with national health service trusts to provide temporary staffing solutions. In the first instance, NHS Professionals will always

endeavour to provide staff from its own bank. If this is not possible, then vacancies will be passed to agency staff approved by the partner trust.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate NHS Professionals has made of the unit cost of an agency placement. [152993]

Mr. Hutton: Because of variations in the method of calculation, the NHS Professionals Special Health Authority is unable to estimate a reliable average unit cost for an agency placement.

Public Bodies

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the costs were of setting up the Commission for Social Care Inspection; and what estimate has been made of the costs of operation in its first year. [154466]

Dr. Ladyman: The set up of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is still ongoing and the final cost is not yet available but the estimated total cost is in the order of £7 million.

A budget for the cost of operating the new body in its first year (2004–05) has not yet been set but its running cost it is likely to be in the region of £150 million. As the new body will be part-financed from fees generated from its regulatory and inspection function, the net running cost which is met by a grant in aid from the Department is likely to be around £104 million.

Rural Elderly

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the support structures in place to promote the well-being of the rural elderly. [153999]

Dr. Ladyman: In March 2003, the Department of Health provided information to the Countryside Agency on 'rural proofing' health and social care services, including those for older people. This information was included in the agency's report Rural Proofing in 2002–03. The report can be viewed at www.countryside.gov.uk/publications.

Skin Disease

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reasons the management of chronic skin disease was not included within the directed enhanced services of the new general medical services contract; [153259]

(2) for what reason skin diseases were omitted from the new general practitioner contract; and if he will make a statement; [R] [153260]

(3) what input his Department had in deciding the disease areas outlined under clinical domains in the quality framework for the general practitioner contract; [R] [153261]

(4) what factors were taken into account in deciding which disease areas should be included in the general practitioner contract's quality framework and essential services; [R] [153262]

(5) what assessment he has made of how the new general practitioner contract will benefit patients with chronic skin conditions. [R] [153263]

Mr. Hutton: No disease is omitted from the new general medical services contract. The legal definition of essential services ensures that skin conditions will continue to be managed and treated in primary care to the extent such conditions can be handled appropriately and effectively in that setting. The contract also provides unprecedented investment in primary care and new mechanisms and opportunities through enhanced services to expand the range of services, improve convenience and choice for patients. This will allow the shift of specialised dermatology services from hospitals to primary care.

The quality and outcomes framework was developed by an independent group of academic general practitioners whose recommendations on which disease areas to include were based on the disease priorities across the United Kingdom, evidence-based practice and accepted national clinical guidelines, and an understanding that responsibility for ongoing management and care of patients rests principally with general practitioners and the primary care team.

The contract was negotiated and agreed by the National Health Service Confederation, acting on behalf of all UK Health Departments, and the British Medical Association.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the impact on the NHS of the Working Time Directive changes coming into force this year. [152820]

Mr. Hutton: The Department regularly discusses the impact of the Working Time Directive both formally and informally with key professional groups and national health service managers in the context of NHS compliance for doctors in training from 1 August 2004.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 12 February 2004

WALES

Devolution

Mr Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the cost to public funds of setting up devolved government in Wales was. [154397]

Mr. Touhig: The Welsh Block has not increased as a result of devolution. Any additional administrative costs arising from devolution are a matter for the Assembly.

Farm Incomes

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the average farm income was in Wales, broken down by *(a)* constituency and *(b)* local authority area for each year since 1997. [151725]

Mr. Touhig: The information is not available in the form requested.

Net incomes for all Welsh farms for each year since 1999 are published in "Estimates of Farm Incomes in Wales" and are listed as follows.

	£
1999–2000	4,100
2000–01	6,100
2001–02	[1]9,100
2002–03	[2]10,100

[1] Provisional
[2] Forecast

Net farm income is defined as the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant type of capital of the business.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* suspended, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* prosecuted and *(d)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved in each of the cases listed were. [154372]

Mr. Touhig: None.

Dee Cockle Regulation Order

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has planned discussions with the First Minister of the National Assembly with regard to hastening progress towards the implementation of the Dee Cockle Regulation Order. [154149]

Mr. Touhig: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 773W, I gave assurances that both the Welsh Assembly and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs stand ready to respond swiftly and positively to requests for assistance in this matter from the Environment Agency Wales. When the Environment Agency Wales submit a formal application for a Regulation order, the Government will act as quickly as possible.

My right hon. Friend has regular meetings with the First Secretary and I meet the Welsh Assembly Agriculture Secretary and DEFRA Ministers to discuss a variety of agriculture issues, including the cockle industry.

Department Branding

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much his Department and its predecessors spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154077]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was created in 1999. We are not able to provide a breakdown of the old Welsh Office spending but between 1997–98 and 1998–99 a total of £5,346,000 was spent on advertising.

Between 1999–2000 and 2003–04, the Wales Office spent the following amounts:

(a) Nothing on consultancy fees for branding
(b) £17,964 on new designs for stationery.
(c) £3,818 on website design.
(d) £6,333 on other material featuring new logos.

Higher Education

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether it is his policy that the Higher Education Bill should exempt English students studying in higher education institutions in Wales from payment of top-up fees. [153393]

Mr. Touhig: The provisions of the Higher Education Bill would transfer to the National Assembly for Wales responsibility for tuition fee levels in Welsh Institutions and student support for students resident in Wales.

The Assembly Education and Lifelong Learning Minister has given a commitment that variable fees will not be introduced in Wales during the lifetime of the present Assembly. Future policy with regard to tuition fees in Wales will be decided by the Assembly, following an independent review by Professor Teresa Rees.

Miners' Compensation

Donald Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the most recent figure is for sums paid for compensation in *(a)* final and *(b)* interim settlements to sick miners in Wales, their widows or families for vibration white finger and respiratory diseases. [154308]

Mr. Touhig: As of 8 February 2004, the total compensation paid out in Wales for Vibration White Finger is £104 million and £292 million for respiratory disease.

I will shortly write to my right. hon. Friend with a breakdown of these figures in the terms he requests and place copies in the Library of the House.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155166]

Mr. Hain: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Wales and I both travel by train on a weekly basis in connection with our ministerial duties.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many visits he has made to *(a)* prisons, *(b)* police forces, *(c)* young offenders' institutions and *(d)* drug rehabilitation centres in Wales since October 2002. [151738]

Mr. Hain: I have visited south Wales Police Force at their headquarters in Bridgend and North Wales Police Force at their headquarters Colwyn Bay. In addition my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales has visited Gwent Police Force at their headquarters in Croesyceiliog and the "Safer Swansea" police initiative. He has also met with the Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys. I have visited one young offenders institution.

TREASURY

Benefit/Tax Credit Expenditure

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out the *(a)* benefit and *(b)* tax credit expenditure in the UK for each year since 1996–97, (i) in total and (ii) broken down by (A) contributory, (B) non-contributory and (C) income-related benefits. [154740]

Dawn Primarolo: The information sought on benefit expenditure is available on the Department for Work and Pensions' website, at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/Table3.xls

The information on expenditure on working families and disabled persons tax credits from 1999–2000 to 2002–03 is presented in the Inland Revenue's Annual Reports for the years 2000–01 to 2002–03. These are available on the Inland Revenue's website, at www.inlandrevenue.go.uk.

Block Grant

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the Scottish Executive regarding the apportionment of the block grant. [154485]

Mr. Boateng: Treasury Ministers meet Scottish Executive Ministers regularly to discuss a range of subjects.

Carbon Tax

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to bring forward proposals for a carbon tax to replace existing levies. [154226]

John Healey: The Government believe the Climate Change Levy is an effective way of encouraging reductions in the use of energy and is an important policy in our climate change programme and therefore we have no plans to introduce a carbon-based tax. The EU emissions trading scheme, a tradable permit scheme that creates a market in carbon, will be introduced from 2005. Decisions on taxation policy are announced by the Chancellor in the context of his annual Budget statement.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150261]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, South (Mr. Alexander) gave to the hon. Member on 9 February, *Official Report*, columns 1293–98W.

National Savings and Investments information was not included in the central answer and therefore the information is detailed as follows:

On 1 January 2004, National Savings and Investments employed a total of 119 staff broken down by grade as follows:

Range	*Civil Service equivalent grade*	*Number*
SCS	SCS	10
A	SEO/Grade 6 and 7	31
B	SEO/ HEO	38
C	EO	24
D	AO/AA	16

As of 31 March 1997, National Savings employed 4,290 full-time equivalent staff. The historical breakdown of grading is unavailable. Of the 4,290 staff, eight were SCS. This information was published in the annual report for 1996–97.

Customs and Excise

Mr. Hawkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking in relation to Customs and Excise following the most recent developments in the London City Bond and Operation Puma cases, with particular reference to its prosecution function; what steps he is taking in relation to the disclosure of information by HM Customs and Excise to the Butterfield Inquiry into this matter; and if he will make a statement. [154653]

John Healey: As I announced in written statements of 15 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 18WS, and 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 72WS, the Government have accepted the recommendations contained in Mr. Justice Butterfield's report on his review of criminal investigations and prosecutions

conducted by HM Customs and Excise, which was published in full on 15 July 2003 and is available in the Library of the House. His recommendations on the future conduct of prosecutions of cases investigated by HM Customs and Excise, including the separation of the prosecuting function from Customs (begun in April 2001 in line with the recommendations of the Gower-Hammond review in 2000–01), are being implemented with the creation of an independent Customs and Excise Prosecutions Office reporting to the Attorney-General.

Mr. Justice Butterfield received total co-operation from Customs officers, as he recognised in his report. In the course of its review of London City Bond-related convictions last year Customs continued to trawl all areas of the Department for any material of potential relevance both to ongoing appeals against conviction and to the issues examined by Mr. Justice Butterfield. Further disclosable material that was uncovered was passed directly to the Metropolitan Police to assist their investigation into the circumstances of the collapse of the London City Bond cases and to Mr. Justice Butterfield for his consideration. Although Customs had already indicated that it would not be contesting their appeals, Customs also disclosed that material to all the appellants in the Operation Puma case on 28 January 2004.

Department Branding

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department spent on branding the Department, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery between 1997–98 and 2003–04, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154066]

Ruth Kelly: The Treasury's branding was reviewed between 2000 and 2002. The work was undertaken by the in-house publications team, with limited assistance from freelance designers at a cost of less than £5,000.

The relaunch of the Treasury's website in November 2001 and the move to new offices in summer 2002 meant that new branding could be incorporated incrementally at little additional cost.

EU Committees

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* duties and *(b)* immediate work programme of each Lamfalussy committee are; and what the United Kingdom representation on each committee is. [154559]

Ruth Kelly: The seven Lamfalussy committees are the European Banking Committee (EBC), the European Securities Committee (ESC), the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Committee (EIOPC), the Financial Conglomerates Committee (FCC), the Committee of European Banking Supervisors (CEBS), the Committee of European Securities Regulators (CESR) and the Committee of European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Supervisors (CEIOPS). The duties of the FCC can be found in Article 21 of the Financial Conglomerates Directive (2002/87/EC, published in the *Official Journal* of the European Union (OJ) on 11 February 2003, L35/1). The duties of the six other committees can be found in the respective Commission Decisions establishing them, published in the *Official Journal* of the European Union on the 7 January 2004, L3, volume 47.

The immediate work programmes of CEBS, CESR and CEIOPS are under discussion and have not been published. The Financial Services Authority (FSA) represents the UK on each of these committees.

The immediate work programmes of the EBC, ESC and FCC have not been published. The work programme of the EIOPC can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/insurance/docs/markt-2535–03-rev1/2535–03-rev1_en.pdf. HM Treasury represents the UK on each of these committees.

European Institutions

Ann Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the gross UK contribution to the *(a)* EU and *(b)* European institutions was in each of the last five years. [155007]

Ruth Kelly: Details of the United Kingdom's gross contribution to the EC Budget and contribution to the reserves and capital of the EIB for the financial years 1997–98 to 2002–03 can be found at Table 3.1 (page 14) of the 2003 European Community Finances White Paper (Cm 5800).

Ann Winterton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the gross EU funding to the UK for *(a)* the Common Agricultural Policy, *(b)* regional funding and *(c)* other allocations was in each of the last five years. [155008]

Ruth Kelly: Details of the United Kingdom's public sector receipts from the EC Budget for the financial years 1997–98 to 2002–03 can be found at Table 3.2 (page 14) of the 2003 European Community Finances White Paper (Cm 5800).

Excise Duty Fraud

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the terms of reference of the independent review of excise duty fraud levels; and when the review will be concluded. [154779]

John Healey: Following interest from the Public Accounts Committee, I have welcomed the Comptroller and Auditor General, Sir John Bourn's commitment to carry out a review of the estimates of spirits duty fraud. The scope and timing of that review are a matter for him. I have ensured that he has been offered the full assistance of my officials.

Invest to Save

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which organisations have bid successfully for the Invest to Save Budget since it began; and how much each received. [154321]

Mr. Boateng: The Invest to Save Budget (ISB) has allocated £385 million to 401 organisations. A table showing the list of successful bidders and the amounts they each received has been placed in the Library of the House.

Ivory

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Maidstone and The Weald (Miss Widdecombe), of 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1082–83W, on ivory seizures, for what reasons no prosecutions have been initiated by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. [154812]

John Healey: Customs will normally prosecute in those cases where a deliberate or organised attempt has been made to evade or breach for commercial gain the controls on ivory. Customs would look carefully at the circumstances of any case where seized ivory is either antique or harvested legitimately prior to the ban imposed on commercial trade in ivory from African elephants in 1990. Such ivory can be lawfully traded provided that it is accompanied by the appropriate documentation issued by the competent authorities.

Many seizures of ivory involve a small quantity found in the possession of members of the travelling public who are shown after inquiries to have breached the controls unwittingly—for example by importing items which were on open sale and were bought in good faith, or by exporting items that have been held in the UK legitimately for some time.

Two detections in 2001 involved commercial quantities of ivory which had been deliberately concealed. Both cases involved ivory in transit through the UK to another country of destination. Customs agreed with the law enforcement authorities in the countries of destination to allow these consignments to go forward for further investigation there. Customs have no information on the outcome of those investigations.

Mr. Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the combined weight of ivory and ivory products seized by HM Customs and Excise was in each of the last five years. [153057]

John Healey: The information sought is not available. Customs' systems are not able to identify the combined weight of seized ivory or ivory products.

Large Business Office

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 934–35W, on future tax yield, what design methodology was used to produce the automated system introduced in April 1998 to calculate the compliance performance of the Inland Revenue's Large Business Office; at which stage in the methodology the design faults occurred and who authorised the faulty design to proceed to the next stage of development; whether the Large Business Office's compliance performance for the year 1998–99 has been correctly recorded in Inland Revenue Annual Reports to date; whether the new reporting system was tested prior to introduction against base data from recent years to ensure that the results produced by the new automated system matched those produced by the previous unautomated system; who signed for acceptance of the new system in 1998; when the integrity of the results produced by the automated system introduced in 1998 was first questioned, and by whom; upon what dates the errors were first detected; upon what dates the matter was brought to the attention of *(a)* the Director Large Business Office, Internal Audit *(b)* the Inland Revenue Fraud Champion, *(c)* the Commissioner responsible for the Large Business Office, *(d)* the Board of Inland Revenue, *(e)* the Paymaster General, *(f)* the National Audit Office and *(g)* himself; whether the automated system had a purpose other than to produce a single number recording the Large Business Office's total compliance performance; how many man days of effort were required to produce the automated system as introduced in April 1998; for how long it was under development; what programming language or software package was employed; and what the cost of the system to the point of introduction was. [154389]

Dawn Primarolo: The Large Business Office (LBO) IT system was developed by a partnership of EDS and the LBO between October 1996 and November 1997 with a commercial software package, 'Composer'. The system cost £1.92 million including equipment and software licenses. The number of staff days of development is not now known. The system enabled the LBO to support and monitor their casework; it was formally accepted in 1998 by senior management of the LBO.

There was a credibility check of the data provided early in the use of the system, and in 2000, LBO senior management asked questions about data on some individual cases. The Director asked the Inland Revenue's internal auditors to review the accuracy of data for 2001–02. Their interim report enabled some adjustment to be made to the reported figures for that year and errors in reporting future years' tax effects were eliminated for 2001–02 onwards. A follow up review of processes commissioned in 2003 revealed that some LBO caseworkers were not reporting yield in line with departmental guidance.

The relevant Commissioner was kept fully informed throughout. The Board received a report on the issues raised by the 2003 review. Ministers were informed on 12 November 2003 of the need to correct yield figures. The NAO have discussed LBO yield as part of their current work on corporation tax. There is no information available for 1998–99.

Mineworkers Pension Fund

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in receipt of a pension from the Mineworkers Pension Fund are taxed on it; and what the tax take from fund pensions has been to date. [154612]

Ruth Kelly: No estimates are available since information on the scheme from which an individual's pension is paid is not held centrally.

Ministerial Directions

Mr. Soames: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list all ministerial directions since financial year 1997–98. [153029]

Ruth Kelly: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 30 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 311W; to the answer given by the Economic Secretary (John Healey) on 23 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 617W; to the answer given by the Chief Secretary

(Mr. Boateng) to the hon. Member for South Norfolk (Mr. Bacon) on 10 June 2002, *Official Report*, column 1037W; the answer given by his predecessor (Mr. Andrew Smith) to the hon. Member for South Norfolk (Mr. Bacon) on 8 May 2002, *Official Report*, column 253W; and to the previous answer he gave to the hon. Member for Truro and St. Austell (Matthew Taylor) on 23 October 2000, *Official Report*, column 73W.

Small Business Taxation

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will ensure that measures which will be introduced in the 2004–05 Finance Bill affecting the taxation of small businesses *(a)* reflect the regulatory compliance costs small businesses already bear, and *(b)* are sensitive to the needs of small companies endeavouring to expand; and if he will make a statement. [154862]

Dawn Primarolo: The implications for business of measures announced at the Budget will be taken into account as part of the normal Budget process. The Government are committed to developing a strong enterprise economy in the UK and promoting productivity as well as encouraging innovation, investment and skills.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money he estimates would be lost in revenue if *(a)* the 1 per cent. level of stamp duty for properties between £60,001 and £250,000 and *(b)* the 3 per cent. level of stamp duty for properties between £250,001 and £500,000 was removed. [R] [154561]

Ruth Kelly: The estimated yield from the various stamp duty consideration bands for 2002–03, the latest year for published data, is given on the Inland Revenue website at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/stamp_duty/03IR153.pdf.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much stamp duty was paid in each of the last five years. [R] [154562]

Ruth Kelly: Stamp Duty receipt amounts for the years from 1997–98 to 2002–03 are published on the Inland Revenue website at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/stamp_duty/03IR151.pdf.

Tax Credits

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether existing tax credit claimants responding to the Department's request for information needed to finalise 2003–04 awards and, if appropriate, renew their claim for a 2004–05 award will be required to supply a P60 for 2003–04; and by which date employees are expected to receive their P60s. [149518]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 20 January 2004]:* Claimants will not be required to supply their P60 for 2003–04 in order to finalise their tax credits award for that year or, if appropriate, renew their claim for 2004–05.

Employees should receive their P60s for 2003–04 by 31 May 2004.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal By-Products Regulation

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what advice she has issued to intermediate reception centres on the definition of covered space to receive animal by-products in the Animal By-Products Regulations; [153467]

(2) what guidance she received from the European Commission about the definition of covered space. [153468]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have received no guidance from the European Commission regarding the definition of "covered space". However, the Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002 requires Intermediate Plants to have a "covered space " to receive animal by-products. It also requires the plant to be constructed in such a way that it is easy to clean and disinfect, and that floors must be laid down in such a way as to facilitate the draining of liquids. The plant must also have appropriate arrangements for protection against pests, such as insects, rodents and birds. In our view, the combination of these requirements make it necessary for the plant to have a roof, walls and a floor before we can approve it. The application form for approval of an Intermediate Plant provides guidance on the requirements of the Regulation, and states that

> "the covered space must be securely enclosed, i.e. in a permanent, weather-proof, vermin-proof structure".

However, any operation which could demonstrate that it complied with the requirements of the EU Regulation in some other way could also be approved.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received about the effect of the Animal By-Products Regulations on small abattoirs. [153470]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department undertook an extensive consultation process on the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003 No.1482). This included discussions with representatives of the abattoir industry. Organisations representing abattoirs that responded to the consultation included the Meat and Livestock Commission and the Association of Independent Meat Suppliers.

My noble Friend Lord Whitty met with the Small Business Association to discuss the impact of the Regulation on small abattoirs and the Department also wrote to all abattoir operators with a questionnaire seeking information on the operational, structural and cost implications of the Regulation. Approximately 200 operators responded.

Animal Welfare (Wales)

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent *(a)* representations and *(b)* proposals she has received from the National Assembly for Wales Government regarding the further devolution of provisions relating to animal welfare. [154254]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 10 February 2004]*: We have been considering with the National Assembly Government further devolution of powers in the area of

animal welfare and animal health for some time. Any such devolution will be subject to ratification by the UK Government.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what specific characteristics are exhibited by badger groups under population stress; [153964]

(2) what the effects of over-population are on the health of badger populations. [153965]

Mr. Bradshaw: Central Science Laboratory studies suggest that body weight in badgers is density dependent, with lower average weights occurring as group size approaches carrying capacity. The association between body weight and badger density suggests that food is a major factor limiting badger numbers.

The notion that badger populations are "over-populated" is erroneous. Badgers display a sophisticated regulatory mechanism, where fecundity and mortality are in equilibrium to maintain the population at a level which the habitat will support.

There is no information linking the health status of badgers to population density. TB is known to occur in low density badger populations, and studies by Central Science Laboratory have demonstrated that there is no linear relationship between badger density and TB prevalence.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether domestic cats are susceptible to infection by *M. bovis* bacillus; whether any such infections have been recorded; and whether the infection can be transferred to man. [153919]

Mr. Bradshaw: Like most terrestrial mammals, domestic cats are susceptible to infection by *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*). Cases have been recorded in Great Britain and other countries but current incidence is very sporadic. TB in cats is not notifiable although it is good practice to contact the State Veterinary Service (SVS) if it is suspected. The SVS will undertake to assist with the identification of *M. bovis* in any clinical or pathological specimens.

The infection can be transferred to man, therefore, if a confirmed case of *M. bovis* infection in a cat comes to the attention of the SVS, the Divisional Veterinary Manager will inform the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) of the local health authority. Investigation of the TB status of any human contacts is the responsibility of the CCDC. If TB is reported in a farm cat the SVS will instigate tuberculin check tests of cattle on that farm, and of potential contacts on neighbouring premises.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are taken by her Department to ensure that guidelines on testing badgers for *M. bovis* infection before release by animal hospitals are properly observed. [153923]

Mr. Bradshaw: Animal hospitals treating sick or injured badgers are not legally required to test animals for bovine tuberculosis before they are released from captivity.

To minimise the risk of animal hospitals accidentally spreading tuberculosis Defra facilitated development of the voluntary protocol for the rehabilitation and release of badgers. This was drawn up by the RSPCA, National Federation of Badgers Groups and Secret World Wildlife Rescue. The protocol provides comprehensive guidance on the precautions necessary to protect the welfare of badgers and critically, to minimise the risk of transmitting bovine tuberculosis. The protocol is promoted by the organisations above and is available via the internet at: http://www.badger.org.uk/action/badger-rehabilitation-protocol-contents.html

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of whether infection of *M. bovis* bacillus between infectious female badgers and their offspring leads to an increase over time in the incidence of infection within a social group. [153924]

Mr. Bradshaw: From research carried out by the Central Science Laboratory, it is believed that the transmission of infection from mothers to cubs may be important in the maintenance of TB infection in badger populations. There is a correlation between the presence of infectious females in a group and the proportion of TB positive cubs. No information is available as to whether this has influenced the incidence of infection within a social group over time.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the accuracy of the size of the badger population in Great Britain as reported by the National Badger Survey; [153953]

(2) what estimate she has made of the minimum size of the badger population in the United Kingdom necessary to ensure its continued survival; [153958]

(3) what estimate she has made of the optimum size of the badger population in the United Kingdom; [153959]

(4) what estimate she has made of the maximum size of badger population which can be sustained in the United Kingdom; [153960]

(5) what estimate she has made of the change in the badger population in Great Britain since the last National Badger Survey. [153974]

Mr. Bradshaw: In a 1995[1] report reviewing the status of mammals in the United Kingdom, commissioned by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the badger population estimate provided by the 1980s National Badger Survey was given the highest possible rating for accuracy (one on a scale of one to five, where one is the most accurate). As the 1990s National Badger Survey[2] followed the same methodology as the earlier exercise, its results can be afforded a similar high level of confidence.

I can confirm that the Department has not estimated any of the following population parameters for badgers in the United Kingdom:

The minimum population size necessary to ensure its continued survival.

The optimum size of the population.

The maximum size of population that can be sustained.

In the report of the 1990s National Badger Survey[2], the authors concluded that there was "substantial scope for further badger population expansions" as badger setts were still scarce or absent in many suitable areas (especially in East Anglia and parts of Scotland). However, the authors also said that "in areas with established badger populations, it was unlikely that further significant increases would occur".

Since there has been no national badger survey since the mid-1990s, we do not know whether the population level has changed in the interim.

As I explained in my reply to the hon. Member's earlier question, 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1W, my Department has been funding the Winter Mammal Monitoring Project[3] which is being carried out by the Mammal Society and the British Trust for Ornithology. This is a pilot study intended to develop a terrestrial monitoring system for British mammals, including badgers. Early findings confirm the pattern of distribution reported in the National Badger Survey, but it is too early to say whether, and by how much, badger numbers have changed since the 1990s.

[1] "A review of British mammals: population estimates and conservation status of British mammals other than cetaceans" (1995). Stephen Harris, Pat Morris, Stephanie Wray and Derek Yalden. Published by the Joint Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough, UK.

This publication is available online at: www.jncc.gov.uk/Publications/review_britishmammals/areviewofbritishmammalsall.pdf

[2] "Changes in the British badger population, 1988 to 1997" (1997). G. Wilson, S. Harris and G. McLaren. People's Trust for Endangered Species (ISBN 1 85580 018 7)

[3] Further details and preliminary results from the Winter Mammal Monitoring Project are available online at: www.bto.org/survey/special/mammal_results.htm

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* proportion of adult badgers in Great Britain currently infected with *M. bovis* vacillus and *(b)* proportion of those that are infective. [153955]

Mr. Bradshaw: National data, on which such assessments would need to be based, are not available.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what grounds legal protection has been afforded to badgers. [153962]

Mr. Bradshaw: The badger benefits from legal protection introduced to outlaw cruelty towards animals. For example, the Protection of Animals Act 1911, which among other things, made the baiting of animals illegal, and the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, which made certain specified acts of cruelty illegal.

In addition, there are legal restrictions on the range of methods that can be used to kill or take badgers. This protection was introduced to outlaw inhumane and/or indiscriminate methods of control. The key legislation in this respect is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Some of these restrictions apply to all animals, while others apply only to animals, like the badger, listed on schedule 6 of the Act.

There have also been specific laws to protect badgers. These were introduced as a welfare measure to combat illegal badger baiting, and also as a conservation measure in response to declines in badger numbers in the 1970s and 1980s. The various statutes specifically relating to badgers were consolidated under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the limiting factors are on the size of the badger population in the United Kingdom in the absence of predation and intervention by man. [153963]

Mr. Bradshaw: The abundance of wild animals is ultimately limited by the availability of key resources. In the United Kingdom, food and suitable sites for setts are likely to be the key constraints on the size of the badger population.

Departmental Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the members of *(a)* the Environment Agency Board, *(b)* the Farm Animal Welfare Council, *(c)* the Food Advisory Committee, *(d)* Food From Britain and *(e)* the Harbour Commission were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [150837]

Alun Michael: The information requested is as follows:

Name	*Term of office*	*Remuneration (£)*
(a) Environment Agency		
Chair		
Sir John Harman	1 January 2004–31 December 2007	87,475
Deputy Chair		
Prof. Donald Ritchie	1 July 2001–30 June 2004	32,805
Ex-officio Member		
Lady Barbara Young	11 December 2000–10 December 2005	Unpaid
Members		
Mr. Colin Beardwood	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	25,515
Mr. Peter Bye	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	18,225
Mr. Ted Cantle	18 September 2003–17 September 2006	18,225
Mr. Andrew Dare CBE	1 February 2002–1 February 2005	21,870
Mr. John B. Edmonds	30 May 2002–31 May 2005	21,870
Prof. Richard Macrory	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	18,225

Name	Term of office	Remuneration (£)
Mr. Peter Matthews	18 September 2003–17 September 2006	21,870
Ms Sara Parkin OBE	18 September 2003–17 September 2006	18,225
Mr. Richard Percy	1 November 2003–31 October 2006	14,589
Dr. Lyndon Stanton	30 May 2002–31 May 2005	21,870
Mrs. Kay Twitchen	1 April 2004–31 March 2007	25,515
Mr. Gareth Wardell	8 August 2000–7 August 2004	25,515
Prof. Lynda Warren	10 October 2003–9 October 2006	25,515
(b) Farm Animal Welfare Council		
Chair		
Dr. Judy Macarthur Clark	1 December 2002–31 December 2004	199 per meeting
Members		
Mr. Ian Douglas Baker	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	125 per meeting
Mrs. Rosemary Berry	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	125 per meeting
Mr. John Don	1 January 2003–31 December 2005	125 per meeting
Prof. Peter English	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	125 per meeting
Mr. Graham Godbold	1 October 2004–31 December 2006	125 per meeting
Mr. Edmund Harper	1 January 2003–31 December 2005	125 per meeting
Mr. David C. Henderson	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	125 per meeting
Mr. James William Hook	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	125 per meeting
Prof. Alistair Lawrence	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	125 per meeting
Mr. Stephen Andrew Lister	1 January 2002–31 December 2005	125 per meeting
Mr. Gareth Jones Lloyd	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	125 per meeting
Mr. Richard Maunder	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	125 per meeting
Prof. John Peter Mcinerney	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	125 per meeting
Miss Miriam Jane Parker	1 January 2003–31 December 2005	125 per meeting
Dr. Martin James Potter	1 January 2003–31 December 2005	125 per meeting
Mrs. Barbara Smith	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	125 per meeting
Mr. Selwyn Michael Vaughan	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	125 per meeting
(c) Food Advisory Council		
Information on the Food Advisory Council is available from the Food Standards Agency, who report to Parliament through Health Ministers.		
(d) Food from Britain		
Chair		
Mr. Gordon Summerfield	1 January 2003–31 December 2005	48,523
Members		
Mr. David Baines	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	1,800
Mr. John David Bevington	10 December 2002–9 December 2005	1,800
Mr. Vincent Craig	1 June 2002–31 May 2005	1,800
Prof. David Croisdale-Appleby	27 March 2003–26 March 2006	1,800
Mr. David Dobbin	1 December 2003–30 November 2006	1,800
Mrs. Christine Dunn	10 December 2002–9 December 2005	1,800
Mr. Stuart Gates	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	1,800
Sir Arthur Benjamin Gill	1 April 2002–31 March 2005	1,800
Mr. Paul Grant	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	1,800
Lady Sylvia Jay	27 March 2003–26 March 2006	1,800
Mrs. Christine Lewis	1 January 2004–31 December 2006	1,800
Mrs. Carolyn Newman	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	1,800
Mrs. Marie Skinner	27 March 2003–26 March 2006	1,800
Mr. Rudolph Tom Vyner CBE	1 April 2002–31 March 2005	1,800
(e) The Harbour Commission		
Responsibility for appointments to Harbour Commissions was transferred to the Department for Transport in October 2001.		

Fisheries

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are being taken to deter fishermen from applying techniques which result in the distortion of standard diamond netting. [150899]

Mr. Bradshaw: A number of EU technical rules have been adopted to discourage the distortion of diamond netting, including limits on the numbers of meshes allowed in the circumference of a net, a requirement for the top and bottom of codends and extension pieces to be of the same material and dimensions and restrictions on what may be attached to codends.

Disused Mines

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what further action she will take to reduce emissions of methane gas from disused mines. [153250]

Alun Michael: We have secured exemption from the Climate Change Levy for electricity generated from methane from disused coal mines in the United Kingdom.

This was approved by the European Commission following representation by the Government, and came into effect on 1 November 2003. My Department is sponsoring research to reduce the uncertainties associated with these emissions, and the Department of Trade and Industry has commissioned a study into possible ways to encourage the control of these emissions. The Government will consider what further action to take following the publication of this report, which we expect to be available in March.

Endangered and Protected Species

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the criteria are for designating an animal species in the United Kingdom as *(a)* an endangered and *(b)* a protected species; [153956]

(2) under what circumstances an animal previously categorised in the United Kingdom as endangered or protected is deregistered or otherwise removed from the list; and what conditions must be met for statutory protection to be removed. [153957]

Mr. Bradshaw: As previously mentioned in the answer given to the hon. Member on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1W, the animal species listed on schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 are reviewed every five years. My previous answer details the criteria used for assessing whether species should be added to the schedule for the Fourth Quinquennial Review, which will be consulted upon in 2004. The Quinquennial Review criteria relate only to taxa that are endangered or is likely to become endangered.

Endangered species are also identified through inclusion in Red Data Books, where the threats to survival of species are assessed using internationally recognised criteria.

Part of the Quinquennial Review process is also used to assess whether the species that have been protected by listing on schedule 5 still merit protection. The criteria used are the same as those given in my previous reply of *January 26*.

Fisheries Council

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what power she has to request the Fisheries Council to reconvene. [150912]

Mr. Bradshaw: Meetings of the Fisheries Council and all other formations of the Council are convened by the incumbent Presidency (currently Ireland) which publishes a schedule of planned meetings in advance. Any member state or the commission can request the Presidency to call a special meeting of the Council, in addition to the planned schedule of meetings, but such requests are rare. The Irish Presidency has already scheduled meetings of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council for February, March, April, May and June 2004.

Public Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the members of the *(a)* Rural Development Commission, *(b)* Environment Agency, *(c)* British Waterways Board, *(d)* Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council and *(e)* UK Eco-Labelling Board were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151808]

Alun Michael: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Rural Development Commission

The Rural Development Commission was an NDPB of the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions and was wound up 30 June 2000.

(b) Environment Agency

Members	*Term of office*	*Remuneration (£)*
Chair		
Sir John Harman	1 January 2004–31 December 2007	87,475
Deputy Chair		
Prof. Donald Ritchie	1 July 2001–30 June 2004	32,805
Ex-officio Member		
Lady Barbara Young	11 December 2000–10 December 2005	Unpaid
Members		
Mr. Colin Beardwood	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	25,515
Mr. Peter Bye	1 September 2003–31 August 2006	18,225
Mr. Ted Cantle	18 September 2003–17 September 2006	18.225
Mr. Andrew Dare CBE	1 February 2002–31 February 2005	21.870
Mr. John B. Edmonds	30 May 2002–31 May 2005	21.870
Prof. Richard Macrory	1 January 2002–31 December 2004	18,225
Mr. Peter Matthews	18 September 2003–17 September 2006	21,870
Ms Sara Parkin QBE	18 September 2003–17 September 2006	18,225
Mr. Richard Percy	1 November 2003–31 October 2006	14,580
Dr. Lyndon Stanton	30 May 2002–31-May 2005	21,870
Mrs. Kay Twitchen	1 April 2004–31-March 2007	25,515
Mr. Gareth Wardell	8 August 2000–7 August 2004	25,515
Prof. Lynda Warren	10 October 2003–9 October 2006	5,515

(c) British Waterways Board

	Term of Office	Remuneration (£)
Chair		
Dr. George Greener	10 July 2002–9 July 2005	67,006
Deputy Chair		
Sir Peter Soulsby	1 October 2001–30 September 2004	13,845
Members		
Ms Susan Achmatowicz	10 October 2001–9 October 2004	10,497
Mr. Campbell Christie	1 July 2001–30 June 2004	10,497
Mr. Ian Darling	4 September 2003–3 September 2006	10,497
Mr. George Fleming	10 October 2001–9 October 2004	10,497
Ms Helen Gordon	4 September 2003–3 September 2006	10,497
Mr. Derek Langslow	4 September 2003–3 September 2006	10,497
Ms Janet Lewis-Jones	10 October 2001–9 October 2004	10,497
Ms Adeeba Malik	10 October 2001–9 October 2004	10,497
Mr. Terence Tricker	10 October 2001–9 October 2004	10,497

(d) Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council

	Term of Office	Remuneration (£)
Chair		
Lady Sheelin Knollys	1 February 2003–31 January 2006	197.25 per day
Deputy Chair		
Cllr Stewart Stacey	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Members		
Ms Jane Barren	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Dr. Michael John Bruton	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mr. David Brian Dare	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mrs. Carol Davenport	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mrs. Helen Green	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mr. Tony Hirst	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Dr. Christine Johnstone	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mr. Wyndham Mitchell	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mr. David Morgan	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mr. Michael Palmer	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Dr. David Pattison	1 August 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mr. John Richard Pomfret	1 April 2001–30 April 2004	Unpaid
Mrs. Audrey Smith	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Dr. Nigel John Willby	1 August 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid
Mrs. Fiona Willis	1 April 2001–31 March 2004	Unpaid

(e) UK Eco-Labelling Board

The UK Eco-Labelling Board was an NDPB of the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions and was wound up on 19 April 1999.

Recycling

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking to encourage local authorities to ensure that blocks of flats have recycling bins. [154244]

Mr. Raynsford: I have been asked to reply.

Requirements for the disposal of waste from buildings are set out in Part H, Drainage and Waste Disposal, of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2000. When these Regulations were amended in 2002, a recommendation was made in the supporting Approved Document that "residents only" recycling centres should be provided as part of communal waste collection facilities for flats and other high density housing. It is also recommended that designers and developers should consult the local waste collection authority so that provision for the storage of waste prior to collection can be properly accommodated.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Servants (Disability)

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office by what percentage he estimates that the recorded number of disabled civil servants will change as a result of the proposed change in methodology used to calculate the number of disabled staff in the Civil Service to the percentage of those responding to a questionnaire. [154110]

Mr. Alexander: The Cabinet Office is consulting on a change to the methodology for collecting and calculating staffing figures on disability in order to improve the robustness of the data and to allow better comparisons with other sources of data on disability, such as the Labour Force Survey.

Table 1 sets out the difference that the proposed methodology would have on previously published figures on the basis of information currently held. However, this is unlikely to provide a full picture of the impact of the change as data for previous years is insufficient to be able to distinguish between staff who have declared they do not have a disability and those who have not made any declaration. This information would be collected in future if the proposed change in methodology goes ahead.

If we proceed with the proposed change, disability figures based on the old calculation method will be published alongside the new method in the short-term so that year-on-year comparisons can continue be made.

Table 1:

As at April	*Total disabled*	*Total non-disabled*	*Published percentage*	*Revised percentage using new method*
2003	19,510	355,630	3.6	5.2
2002	18,650	334,940	3.6	5.3
2001	15,520	364,330	3.1	4.1
2000	18,480	410,950	3.7	4.3

Note:

Disability information for MOD is only available for 2000, for later years the data are not provided (but their staff totals were used in the denominator for the Civil Service as a whole).

Source:

Civil Service Statistics Website (http://www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics/css.htm)

Government Cars

Mr. Chope: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) how many fixed penalty notices for speeding were issued against vehicles belonging to the Government Car Service during 2003; [153592]

(2) on how many occasions in the last 12 months for which information is available Government Car Service vehicles have been identified by road safety cameras as travelling in excess of the speed limit; [153593]

(3) how many Government Car Service drivers have resigned during the last 12 months following disqualifications from driving. [153594]

Mr. Alexander: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car and Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr. Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what his policy is on the provision of Government cars to Whips. [154811]

Mr. Alexander: Guidance on the use of official cars is set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel By Ministers.

The Chief Whips in both the Commons and Lords are entitled to be provided with allocated cars. Other whips are able to use cars in the Government Car Service pool for official purposes. This travel is decided on a case-by-case basis.

Public Bodies

Llew Smith: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many non-United Kingdom resident UK citizens sit on non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs); and what costs will be incurred in 2003–04 by the payments of international travel costs to enable their participation in NDPB meetings. [154689]

Mr. Alexander: This information is not held centrally. Individual Departments are responsible for making appointments to their own public bodies and for paying the travel costs incurred by appointees.

Public Services Audit

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answers of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 72W and 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1048W, on public services audit, what inquiries he has made regarding the source of the unauthorised briefing to Rosemary Bennett of *The Times* newspaper. [154934]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1048W.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

European Treaties

Mr. Spring: To ask the Leader of the House to what Treaty he referred to in his letter to Mr. Jonathan Evans MEP of 17 December 2003, in which he stated that the Treaty agreed at the European Council made clear that member states retain control of their natural resources; whether it remains the Government's position that Article III-157 (Section 10: Energy) of the draft Constitution for Europe is unnecessary as all aspects of energy policy are effectively covered elsewhere in the Treaty; whether the Government's concerns on the changing of boundaries of EU competence and the types of measure which will be subject to unanimity have been allayed; and if he will make a statement. [152330]

Mr. Hain: I have written to Jonathan Evans MEP to apologise for an error in my letter of 17 December 2003. No Treaty was agreed at the Inter-Governmental Conference. The Prime Minister did, however, make it clear that good progress had been made in relation to energy matters during negotiations.

An Energy Chapter will bring European competence on energy together in a single legal base. We support the proposal on the basis that it is more transparent than existing legislation. We have, however, consistently set out our concern that any uncertainty about the impact of the Energy Chapter could undermine investment in North sea oil and gas. With that in mind, we proposed a series of amendments to this part of the Treaty with the aim of ensuring that European member states would retain the right to control the exploitation of their natural resources. Maintaining unanimity in relation to tax proposals remains part of the Government's "red line".

We are confident that all our efforts, including work with other member states, will provide a sound basis for future negotiations.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Sports Coaching

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* voluntary, *(b)* part-time and *(c)* full-time qualified athletics coaches in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [154116]

Mr. Caborn: The final report of the Coaching Task Force published by DCMS in July 2002, noted that governing bodies of sport—including athletics—find it difficult to maintain accurate and current records of their qualified coaches, irrespective of their employment status. DCMS has funded Sports Coach UK to commission a UK wide study of coaching across the 31 sports—including athletics—invited to participate in the National Coaching Certificate. The results are expected around Easter.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what estimate she has made of the number of coaches employed through the Coachmatch scheme who will be *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time in each year until 2006; [154114]

(2) what measures her Department has taken to ensure the coaches employed through the Coachmatch scheme will be retained in employment after 2006. [154115]

Mr. Caborn: The Community Sports Coach scheme (formerly known as Coachmatch) will see a first phase of some 100 full-time coaches employed by the end of 2003–04. Decisions on the roll out of the scheme during 2004–05 will be made following evaluation of phase one. We expect that some 450 full-time and 2,550 part-time coaches will be employed by the end of 2005–06.

Future funding for the scheme is dependent on the outcome of the 2004 Spending Review.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) which National Governing Body coaching awards for sport qualify for Learning and Skills Council funding; [154059]

(2) what the maximum grants available from the Learning and Skills Council to meet the cost of volunteers taking sports coaching qualifications are; and if she will make a statement. [154060]

Mr. Caborn: Coaching awards in swimming, gymnastics, orienteering and angling are eligible for funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in England. In addition, if a sport offers an NVQ the LSC will fund the employer and the training provider directly rather than the individual. The value of any LSC grant depends on the length of the course. Typically a coaching qualification in the above sports taking between 60–90 hours to achieve can attract funding of approximately £400 per candidate, irrespective of employment status.

Department Branding

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department and its predecessors spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154076]

Mr. Caborn: The information is as follows:

1997–98

Branding the Department broken down by:

(a) Consultancy fees—The cost of producing a new visual identity for the Department was £26,000. This included all design costs, development of the logo and the layout of all internal and external documents and stationery.

(b) Design and orders for new stationery—The cost of £26,000 included the design and layout of new stationery. Before 1998–99 no record was kept of specific office supplies such as stationery.

(c) Website design—There were no costs incurred for website design during 1997–98.

(d) Other material featuring new logos—The DCMS identity appears on all DCMS external and internal publications and other publicity related items such as backdrops. The spend on publicity materials during 1997–98 was £338,761.

2003–04

Branding the Department broken down by:

(a) Consultancy fees—No moneys have been spent on consultants in relation to DCMS branding during 2003–04.

(b) Designs and orders for new stationery—There were no design costs for stationery during 2003–04. The cost of stationery items carrying the DCMS branding such as: letterhead paper, compliments slips, business cards, folders and various forms is £18,460 to date in this current financial year.

(c) Website design—There was no cost for implementing the DCMS identity on the website as the work was done in-house.

(d) Other materials featuring new logos—The DCMS identity appears on all DCMS external and internal publications and other publicity related items such as backdrops. The spend on publicity materials to date during this current financial year is £295,570.99.

National Lottery

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the largest amount of National Lottery money is that has been awarded to an organisation since its inception. [154292]

Estelle Morris: The organisation which has received the most Lottery money is the New Millennium Experience Company Ltd. It received five grants to a value of £628 million, of which £603 million was drawn upon.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many organisations in Southend, West who have applied for National Lottery funding have had their application turned down; and on what grounds these decisions were made. [154293]

Estelle Morris: This Department has never collected comprehensive information on either the number or value of applications for Lottery grants received by the Distributing Bodies.

Decisions on Lottery grants are made at arm's length from Government and are matters for those organisations.

Picketts Lock

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public money was spent on the Picketts Lock stadium in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [154123]

Mr. Caborn: The only public money spent on the Pickett's Lock stadium was for a feasibility study conducted in 2000–01. Sport England have estimated that the study cost £1.5 million.

As a result of the study, it was decided that the cost of the proposed National Athletics Stadium could not be justified. However, Picketts Lock has successfully applied to become the London High Performance Centre for Athletics. Both primary school children and the local community will benefit from the centre.

Royal Parks Police

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) whether staff transfers will be covered by Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations when the Royal Parks Police is merged with the Metropolitan Police; [153309]

(2) whether the Metropolitan Police has guaranteed to Royal Parks officers the right to continue to work within the parks; [153310]

(3) what will happen to Royal Parks officers who occupy Park Lodges but are not offered employment by the Metropolitan Police; [153311]

(4) what provision will be made for Royal Parks constabulary officers over the age of 60 at the time of the proposed merger with the Metropolitan Police who have a contractual retirement age of 65; [153312]

(5) what will happen to Royal Parks constabulary staff who do not pass the Metropolitan Police health screening process; [153313]

(6) whether early retirement terms will be offered to any Royal Parks Constabulary staff ahead of the proposed merger with the Metropolitan Police; [153314]

(7) what will happen to Royal Parks Constabulary officers who have previously retired from a Home Office force through age and are not eligible for a job with the Metropolitan Police; [153315]

(8) if she will make a statement on the terms proposed by the Metropolitan Police for taking on Royal Parks Constabulary staff. [153316]

Mr. Caborn: Merger of the RPC with the MPS will not happen until the necessary primary legislation is in place. Until then, the RPC will continue to exist and will work alongside an MPS Operational Command Unit which will be in place from 1 April 2004. All those currently working in the RPC will be able to continue to do so, subject to continuing fitness and satisfactory performance, until the legislation to wind up the RPC comes into force.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 ("TUPE") do not automatically apply to the merger, but we intend to ensure that, where appropriate, the transfer arrangements are consistent with the principles of TUPE.

The MPS has made clear its intention to offer jobs to all RPC staff when the RPC is wound up, subject to satisfaction of their eligibility criteria. The precise arrangements, including those for RPC staff who do not pass the MPS health screening process, those who are over 60 at the date of the merger, those who have previously retired from the MPS on grounds of their age and those occupying lodges in the Parks, are being finalised and will be addressed in a staff consultation which we expect to take place this month.

Train Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she last used a train in connection with her ministerial duties. [155164]

Tessa Jowell: I last travelled by train during the course of my official duties on 10 February 2004. I travelled to Bradford from Kings Cross in order to meet the members of Bradford City Council, and visit the National Film and Photographic Museum, the World Heritage Site at Saltaire and the Specialist Sports College in Menston.

All travel by Ministers in this Department is made in line with the guidance set out in Chapter 7 of the Ministerial Code and the accompanying guidance document Travel by Ministers, using the most efficient and cost-effective mode of transport and bearing in mind security considerations. We will continue to do so.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bushmeat

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make representations to the European Commission to implement the European Parliament's resolution on Petition 461/2000 concerning bushmeat. [153213]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There is much in this resolution on Petition 461/2000 that the Government would wish to support. The Department for International Development works closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on bushmeat and livelihoods issues. Officials will be following up with the European Commission about the action they have taken and intend to take on this matter.

Commonwealth Development Corporation

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the proposals in his

Written Statement of 8 January 2004 on reorganisation of CDC will require parliamentary approval; and if he will make a statement. [153420]

Hilary Benn: The proposals described in my Statement of 8 January 2004 do not require parliamentary approval. Nevertheless, I intend to continue to keep Parliament fully informed about these changes as they are implemented.

Departmental Budget

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's total annual budget was in each year since 1997. [154264]

Hilary Benn: In line with changes to Government accounting systems, DFID moved from a cash based budget to a resource based budget in 2001–02. The figures for all years are as listed.

DFID Budget

	Total (£ million)
Cash budget	
1997–98	1,870
1998–99	1,999
1999–2000	2,217
2000–01	2,363
Resource Budget	
2001–02	2,573
2002–03	3,024
2003–04	3,699
2004–05	3,809
2005–06	4,556

Fairtrade Foundation

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the support given to the Fairtrade Foundation over the last four years. [154384]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID have worked closely with the Fairtrade Foundation since 1997. In the last four years:

Through the Development Awareness Fund, we have provided £120,000 to the media campaigns of the Fairtrade Foundation. These are designed specifically to raise both supermarket and consumer awareness of products carrying the Fairtrade Mark.

In 2002, the Foundation began to expand the Fairtrade product range. DFID provided £300,000 to the foundation on a project to extend the reach of Fairtrade labelling to new producers in developing countries. This will lead to an increase in the range of products in the shops for consumers. Nuts, rice and wine are examples of types of products likely to be in the first wave.

In 2002 we gave a grant to support the Fairtrade town/city brand over three years.

A number of the regional Enabling Effective Support strategies for work in schools also include a focus on Fairtrade Fortnight.

This year, the Secretary of State will be launching Fairtrade Fortnight. I will also participate in some key events.

Mozambique

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the reports of the famine early warning systems relating to the potential for drought in Mozambique; and if he will make a statement. [153342]

Hilary Benn: DFID is closely following events. Early season rainfall was well below normal in much of central and southern Mozambique, raising concerns of a third consecutive drought year. Recent rains may still spark crop recovery in the centre of the country, but many areas of southern Mozambique are likely to experience crop failure. Steep price rises in maize, the main staple food, are also probable in southern areas due to crop failure in South Africa and other neighbouring countries. A national assessment of vulnerability and hunger will be made in March after the first harvests have started, and a full needs assessment will be published by April. This will provide sufficient time for DFID and others to look carefully at the assessment and respond as required.

Nuclear Weapons (Aid)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his policy is towards giving aid to countries that illegally obtain nuclear weapons. [152851]

Hilary Benn: The prime consideration in allocating aid is the extent to which we are able to make an impact on reducing extreme poverty. Therefore, our development assistance is concentrated on countries where governments are committed to spending their budgets on poverty reduction priorities.

Issues of good governance and levels of military expenditure (including any nuclear-related spending) are among the factors we take into account in determining aid allocations.

Overseas Development Administration

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much of the Overseas Development Administration's funding was paid to *(a)* governments and *(b)* non-governmental organisations in each year between 1974 and 1997. [154251]

Hilary Benn: This information was not compiled at the time and our records do not hold sufficient detail to analysis this retrospectively.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the Overseas Development Administration's total annual budget was in each year between 1974 and 1997. [154265]

Hilary Benn: We hold records of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) voted budget back to 1983–84. Figures for these years are listed in the table.

ODA Budget

	Total (£ million)
1983–84	1,171
1984–85	1,208
1985–86	1,234
1986–87	1,294
1987–88	1,322
1988–89	1,511
1989–90	1,639

ODA Budget

	Total (£ million)
1990–91	1,691
1991–92	1,897
1992–93	2,021
1993–94	2,052
1994–95	2,141
1995–96	1,983
1996–97	1,855

Details of ODA's total expenditure for earlier years are available in Statistics on International Development. Copies can be found in the House Library.

Wildlife and Poverty

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what progress has been made by his Department in implementing the recommendations of the 2002 Wildlife and Poverty Study; [153150]

(2) if he will discuss wildlife and bushmeat issues with the Governments of *(a)* Ghana and *(b)* Cameroon; [153153]

(3) if he will make a statement about the recent policy papers produced by Dr. David Brown of the Overseas Development Institute concerning issues of bushmeat and livelihoods; [153206]

(4) what assessment his Department's country offices in *(a)* Ghana and *(b)* Cameroon have made of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2002 Wildlife and Poverty Study; [153209]

(5) what assessment he has made of his Department's response to the recommendations of the 2002 Wildlife and Poverty Study; and what impact these recommendations have had on the work of his Department. [153267]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The DFID Wildlife and Poverty Study estimated that 150 million very poor people are significantly dependent on wildlife for their food and livelihoods, and that bushmeat is one important part of this. The study drew out implications for donors, governments, the private sector and civil society, but did not make any explicit recommendations to DFID. We have however disseminated the findings of the study widely.

DFID responds directly to the priorities of our partner countries as set out in their own development agendas, known as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

I am unable to comment on the 'recent policy papers' produced by Dr. David Brown of the Overseas Development Institute concerning issues of bushmeat and livelihoods, as I am not sure precisely which policy papers are being referred to. I am, however, aware of the work that Dr. Brown has been doing for the CITES Bushmeat Working Group, with support from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), with whom DFID works closely on bushmeat and livelihoods issues. DFID supports the view that any actions to address bushmeat should take the livelihoods of poor people fully into account, and that blanket bans on bushmeat harvesting would not be effective and would hit the poor the hardest.

At the ministerial segment of the Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) Conference, held in Cameroon in October 2003, I discussed bushmeat and forest management issues with Ministers from Ghana, Cameroon and other countries. We would expect to continue discussing these issues in the context of AFLEG implementation, as part of DFID's regular dialogue with the Governments of Ghana and Cameroon.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans his Department has to discuss with the governments of *(a)* Cameroon and *(b)* Ghana their poverty reduction strategies in the next 12 months. [153211]

Hilary Benn: In Ghana the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy is discussed with Ministries and Agencies of the Government, and I expect to take forward these discussions when I visit Ghana shortly. There will be an opportunity to take a look at progress when the second annual Monitoring and Evaluation report of the Poverty Reduction Strategy is published in April.

In Cameroon our support for the Poverty Reduction Strategy will focus on forestry reform within the framework of the Forestry and Environment Sector Programme. My officials will be participating in an in-country appraisal of this programme in March.

Sustainable Development

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what resources his Department has allocated to support the UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; [154033]

(2) what activities his Department has planned to mark the beginning of the UN's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2005. [154032]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The United Nations "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" aims to promote education as a basis for a more sustainable human society and to integrate sustainable development into education systems at all levels.

The lead agency for promoting the decade, which starts in 2005, is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). DFID is a long-term partner of UNESCO and is currently its fourth largest contributor, providing approximately £12 million in core funding per year. Under this agreement, DFID gives priority to supporting UNESCO's work to achieve Education For All by 2015.

DFID also supports UNESCO's wider education programme which encompasses education for sustainable development. Activities around the UN decade of Education for Sustainable Development are currently being prepared and will be supported at national and school level in a number of countries where DFID has country programmes. For more information on this decade, please refer to the UNESCO website: www.unesco.org

Uganda

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures he has taken to ensure that development budgets for Uganda are not diverted to defence. [153525]

Hilary Benn: Uganda has a well-developed and consultative process for deciding the Government's annual budget. Donors are involved throughout, and have an opportunity to endorse the budget at the annual public expenditure review. This level of consultation allows partners, including the UK, to ensure Government meets its commitment to prioritise poverty reduction. Allocations to the Government's "Poverty Action Fund" (PAF), for example, have risen from less than 20 per cent. to over 37 per cent. of the Government's budget in the past six years. These allocations have been fully protected during budget execution. Our budget support, and that of other donors, is conditional on our endorsement of the budget and its subsequent execution.

The level of defence spending is a major element of this consultation. The UK has supported a defence review, which is about to conclude. The review's purpose is to develop a long-term strategy for the Army, setting out how roles and capabilities should be adapted to meet the security challenges Uganda faces. It will provide the basis for making well-informed and affordable decisions on the defence budget in the future. We are impressing upon Government the need for consultation around the review's recommendations before future levels of defence expenditure are set. Our aim is to ensure its affordability, and guarantee expenditure for core poverty reduction programmes is not displaced. We will monitor this issue very closely, especially in the context of our budget support.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement about the people living in internally displaced persons camps within Uganda, with particular reference to their need for adequate water, food and security. [153526]

Hilary Benn: The UK remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation caused by the conflict in northern Uganda, now in its 18th year. Insecurity prevents normal development activities, resulting in 63 per cent. of households in the north living below the poverty line compared with 38 per cent. nationally. Our immediate concern is the plight of the large number of displaced people across the region. This group of over 1.3 million faces declining levels of food security due to disruption of the planting and harvesting seasons. They also face serious problems of lack of shelter and physical insecurity. A number of local and international organisations are working to address the emerging needs.

We have provided £7.3 million of humanitarian assistance over the last 12 months. This has been channelled through the World Food Programme, UNICEF and the Uganda Red Cross Society. We are currently allocating a further £1.1 million. Linked to this we are financing UNICEF personnel working on the protection of women and children. We have also provided Save the Children Fund with a grant to improve conditions for the increasing number of unaccompanied children who are sleeping in town centres at night to avoid abduction by the LRA. We are working hard, in partnership with others, to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches all those in need despite some access difficulties across the region.

The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and I raised the conflict and its humanitarian impact in our discussions with President Museveni during his recent UK visit. We, along with our partners in Uganda and the international community, will continue to encourage the Government of Uganda to bring about a sustainable resolution to the conflict.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Learning Grant

11. **Mr. Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adults are entitled to adult learning grant; and what steps his Department is taking to promote the take-up. [154520]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: We estimate that some 6,000 adults may be eligible for the grant in the 10 pilot areas. So far there have been over 2,600 applications.

We are working with the Learning and Skills Council, further education colleges, and advice and guidance agencies in the 10 pilots to promote this new grant. At this stage, the main focus is on promoting the grant to new learners who started courses during January 2004 and to existing learners who may be eligible but have not applied.

Skills Shortages

12. **Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received regarding the impact of skills shortages on productivity. [154521]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It is estimated that lower skills contribute up to 20 per cent. of the UK's productivity gap with France and Germany. The key to productivity is a highly skilled workforce. The Skills Strategy published in July sets out our programme to raise our skill levels to compete with the best in the world. It will be driven forward by the Skills Alliance.

Primary Schools (Health and Safety)

13. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the application of health and safety requirements in primary schools. [154522]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Employers at primary schools must ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health and safety of staff, pupils and visitors to the school site. The employer will usually be the local education authority. In practice the associated tasks are usually delegated to the school staff, for example ensuring drinking water taps are labelled.

School Funding

14. **Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the guaranteed per pupil funding increase for schools for the next academic year. [154523]

Mr. Miliband: The minimum funding guarantee for schools, which is based on a 4 per cent. per pupil increase with adjustments for changes in pupil numbers, will apply for the financial year beginning 1 April 2004. The guarantee will also operate in the 2005–06 financial year, on a basis to be finalised when we have reviewed the way it is working in its first year. The guarantee is an important element of our arrangements for stabilising school funding over the next two years.

Specialist Schools

15. **Vera Baird:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to assist areas which have difficulty in raising private finance sponsorship required to make a specialist school application. [154524]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department funds the Specialist Schools and the Youth Sport Trusts to assist schools to raise sponsorship. The Trusts can also act as a broker between sponsors and schools requiring assistance.

We have also created a "Partnership Fund", made up of Government and private sector funding, to help schools which can demonstrate that, in spite of their determined efforts over time, they have not be been able to raise the necessary level of sponsorship.

School Building

16. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment of the needs of Nottingham schools he has made ahead of his decisions on the Schools for the Future school building programme. [154525]

Mr. Miliband: We published our criteria for prioritisation in the Building Schools for the Future programme in July 2003. This covered education need and vision, and readiness to deliver the programme. All authorities wishing to be in the first year of the programme put forward their proposals on that basis. All proposals have been rigorously assessed and we are announcing the outcome of that today.

Student Finance

17. **Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will reduce the level of payments of university tuition fees for graduates who take up and remain in modestly paid jobs. [154526]

Alan Johnson: The income-contingent repayment scheme for student loans already recognises the needs of graduates who take and remain in poorly paid jobs. Repayments will be 9 per cent. of salary above £15,000 from 2005, and will stop whenever the graduate's salary falls below that threshold. In addition, we propose to write off the outstanding loan after 25 years—that too will benefit graduates in low paid jobs.

18. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has held with the Chancellor on the relationship between projected student debt and household debt. [154527]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There is no relationship between student loans and household debt. Student loans are repaid on an income-contingent basis. We intend that graduates only pay 9 per cent. of their income beyond £15,000 per year. If it falls below £15,000, their repayments stop. Student loans are subsidised by the Government with no real rate of interest—so the burden does not increase, however long the repayment period. The Government propose to write off any outstanding student loan amount after 25 years.

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many charges and of what value have been made in error to graduates whose income did not reach a level where repayment was required for failure to make repayments of student loans. [154001]

Alan Johnson: The information is not available in the form requested. Borrowers with the old, mortgage style, loans may be charged administration fees if they fall into default. This can happen if a borrower's income is below the deferment threshold but they neither apply to defer their loan repayments nor make loan repayments.

Different arrangements apply to the income-contingent loans, where repayment is triggered automatically by the Inland Revenue when the borrower's income exceeds the repayment threshold. Borrowers outside the UK who fail to repay these income-contingent loans to the Student Loans Company when they should, may incur financial penalties.

Where charges are made in error, the Student Loans Company will refund them.

Private Finance Initiative (Schools)

19. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the use of the private finance initiative in schools. [154528]

Mr. Miliband: The use of the private finance initiative in schools has been a popular and successful programme. Popular because more than 100 of the 150 local education authorities in England have applied to take part. Successful because we have progressed from one contract covering one school in 1997 to 66 contracts covering over 600 schools today. Services have started under 40 of these contracts and they represent a private sector capital investment of £1.8 billion.

School Sport

20. **Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how he will assess whether his target that 75 per cent. of all five to 16-year-olds should spend at least two hours a week engaged in physical education and school sport by 2006 has been met. [154529]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Data are now being collected for the first time—for publication in April—on the number of pupils who choose to take up the entitlement to two hours of high-quality PE and school sport each week

within and beyond the curriculum. This exercise will be repeated in future years so that performance against the PSA target can be assessed.

Higher Education Teachers

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his intention that the new national professional standards for teachers in higher education will include a requirement to hold specific or new professional or academic qualifications. [152656]

Alan Johnson: The White Paper, The Future of Higher Education, signalled that in order for teaching in HE to be treated seriously as a profession its own right, national professional standards designed and agreed by the sector should be introduced. Training to meet the new standards should be possible through a wide range of programmes and courses. It is expected that all new teaching staff will be required to obtain a teaching qualification that meets the standards. Qualifications will be awarded by HEIs and could be existing qualifications, adapted and developed as necessary, or newly developed qualifications. The development of the standards and the accreditation of the qualifications are being taken forward by the new sector body, the HE Academy.

Key Stage 3 Tests

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Key Stage 3 English tests were re-marked in each year since 2001; what the cost was of carrying out this re-marking in each year; and if he will make a statement. [152477]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 3 February 2004]*: The figures quoted as follows represent the number of Key Stage 3 English re-marks requested and those which resulted in a change in the level awarded to the pupil in reading, writing and overall. The figures for the number of re-marks which resulted in a change in marks are not available since the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority(QCA) only keeps records relating to changes in level.

Key Stage 3 English	*Number of Re-marks requested*	*Number of Re-marks resulting in a change in level*	*Changes in level as per cent. of whole cohort*
2001	87,985	18,579	3.1
2002	90,510	16,864	2.3
2003	120,780	23,888	3.8

The costs of carrying out the re-marking process for each test subject at each key stage are not held by the External Marking Agency (EMA).

Changes to the test mark schemes were introduced in 2003. The consequent unfamiliarity with the mark scheme resulted in an increase in the number of reviews requested by schools. Due to the increase in level changes following review and the concerns raised by schools, the Department asked QCA to examine the quality control measures in place for both marking and reviews.

Improvements planned for this year include:

The separate marking of reading and writing Key Stage 3 English scripts.

Markers will be asked to focus on one mark scheme and specialise in one component of the tests, either reading or writing.

The electronic calculation of marks and levels, which should eliminate the need to request reviews due to clerical error.

Increased marker supervision, revised marker training and additional training for new markers.

The Government believes that any occurrence of unacceptable marking is a cause for concern and QCA will continue to work together with the EMA to improve the quality and reliability of marking. I believe it is absolutely vital to ensure reliable test results in which pupils, teachers and parents can be confident.

Nottinghamshire Learning and Skills Council

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what reassessment he has made of decisions made by the board of Nottinghamshire Learning and Skills Council in the last six months; [154871]

(2) what conclusions he draws from the inquiry into bullying at Nottinghamshire Learning and Skills Council. [154872]

Alan Johnson: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

R and D

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to whom his Department distributes expenditure on research and development; how many staff are employed as a result; and how many research establishments of *(a)* the Department and *(b)* its agencies there are in each region of England. [154355]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I refer my hon. Friend to the Office for Science and Technology's publication 'The Forward Look 2003—Government funded science, engineering and technology' which provides details of the Department's expenditure on research and development for the period 2001–02 to 2004–05.

The Department does not have any research establishments or agencies.

Scientific Research Infrastructure Programme

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been allocated to *(a)* Newcastle University and *(b)* Northumbria University from the Scientific Research Infrastructure Programme; and what the purpose was of each investment. [154606]

Alan Johnson: The Science Research Investment Fund (SRIF) provides universities with resources to address the backlog in infrastructure for science, engineering and technology research and to invest in the new facilities they need to produce world-class research. It is up to institutions to spend their allocation in line with their own research strategy within the eligibility criteria, which now includes arts and humanities research.

The University of Newcastle received £16,246,007 from the first round of SRIF between 2002 and 2004 and will receive £21,451,684 from the next round of the Fund over the next two years. The University of Northumbria at Newcastle received £731,167 from the first round of SRIF and will receive £1,054,366 from the next round.

Special Needs Education

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received about the continued commissioning from local education authorities of independent specialist education for children with complex and special needs; and if he will make a statement. [154381]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has not received any specific representations on this matter.

Some local authorities have raised concerns about the increased costs of placements in some independent and non-maintained special schools and have cited these costs as a particular pressure on the centrally retained part of the schools budget. It has been one of the reasons some local authorities have given for applying for relaxation of the limits on central spending.

The Department is shortly to issue guidance for local authorities on the management of SEN funding, based on examples of effective practice.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Proceeds of Crime Act

24. **Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Solicitor-General how many applications have been made by the Crown Prosecution Service under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; and how successful the recovery has been. [154533]

The Solicitor-General: Between 24 March 2003 (when the relevant provisions of the POCA came into effect) and the end of 2003, the Crown Prosecution Service applied for and was granted approximately 40 confiscation orders and assets valued in excess of £4.5 million are restrained in respect of 45 defendants. To date enforcement action has been successfully taken in respect of three confiscation orders made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Crown Prosecution Service

25. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the progress of the pilot to place Crown Prosecution Service offices in police stations. [154534]

The Solicitor-General: Shadow charging arrangements are currently operating at 262 out of the 380 police operation units that require cover. Every one of the 42 CPS and police force areas has at least one unit in place and 18 currently have full shadow coverage.

Domestic Violence

26. **Mr. Edwards:** To ask the Solicitor-General what steps she is taking to improve guidance to the Crown Prosecution Service on cases of domestic violence. [154535]

The Solicitor-General: During 2003, Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) undertook a thematic inspection of how domestic violence cases were investigated and prosecuted. The final report is due to be published later this month.

In order to address the findings and recommendations of the inspection and to reflect changes in law and practice, notably the pre-charge advice scheme and possible statutory developments arising from the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill, the detailed guidance that accompanies the Crown Prosecution Service policy on handling domestic violence cases will be updated in autumn 2004.

27. **Mr. Caton:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the relationship between the proposed commissioner for domestic violence and the Crown Prosecution Service. [154536]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service, along with other authorities, will work constructively with the Commissioner to champion the interests of victims and witnesses.

Nottingham Criminal Justice Board

28. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on progress made in recent weeks on the work of the Crown Prosecution Service with the Nottingham criminal justice board in connecting the criminal justice system with local people. [154537]

The Solicitor-General: My hon. Friend asked a very similar question last year, which I answered on 30 October 2003. and earlier this year, which I answered on 19 January 2004.

Ms Kate Carty, the Chief Crown Prosecutor for CPS Nottinghamshire, is an active member of the Local Criminal Justice Board.

I am aware that my hon. Friend met with the Lord Chancellor on 2 February 2004 to discuss the work of the Nottingham Criminal Justice Board.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Cockling

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what health and safety regulations apply to the cockling industry; what steps are being taken to ensure that these regulations are communicated to workers of foreign origin; and if he will make a statement. [154450]

Mr. Pond: The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 applies to the cockling industry as to other industrial sectors and work activities in Great Britain.

The Act places the primary duty on the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess the risks to health and safety at work of their employees and others affected by their work activity; provide their employees

with comprehensible information on the risks to their health and safety identified by the assessment and the preventive and protective measures; and ensure employees are provided with adequate health and safety training. All workers, including those of foreign origin, are entitled to equal protection under health and safety legislation.

Guidance on those regulations makes it clear that employers should provide information in a form which takes account of any language difficulties and that they may need to make special arrangements for employees who have little or no understanding of English. These could include providing translation, using interpreters, or replacing written notices with clearly understood symbols or diagrams.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides basic information in other languages. It is revising existing advice for workers that will be available in a wider range of languages, and HSE will proactively publicise this to help ensure it reaches target audiences. HSE's confidential public inquiry service, Infoline, also offers a telephone interpreting service for callers in over one hundred languages.

Objective 3 Funds

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions where the distribution of Objective 3 takes place with regard to *(a)* location and *(b)* financial amount for the 2000–06 period. [155223]

Mr. Pond: European Social Fund (ESF) Objective 3 is available in all parts of the UK except: the Objective 1 areas of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, and West Wales and the Valleys; and the transitional Objective 1 areas of the Highlands and Islands, and Northern Ireland. The amount of Objective 3 funding for the UK in 2000–06 is £2,940 million.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases of benefit fraud were detected in each of the last six years; and how many of these have resulted in *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions. [151015]

Mr. Pond: The number of cases of benefit fraud detected is not available. The number of cases resulting in prosecution, and cases resulting in conviction, are in the table:

	Prosecutions		*Convictions*	
	DSS/DWP	*Local authorities*	*DSS/DWP*	*Local authorities*
1997–98	11,523	n/a	11,386	700
1998–99	10,129	n/a	9,967	800
1999–2000	9,272	n/a	9,129	900
2000–01	11,584	n/a	11,403	1,100
2001–02	11,355	2,101	11,183	1,732
2002–03	9,396	3,187	9,267	2,503

Notes:
1. For local authorities, figures prior to 2001–02 have been rounded to the nearest 100 because they include estimated values for non-responding local authorities.
2. Figures for local authority prosecutions which did not lead to conviction are not available prior to 2001–02.

Source:
1. DSS/DWP: Fraud Information By Sector
2. Local authorities: From 2001–02 onwards the numbers are taken from subsidy claim forms. Prior to this the numbers are taken from management information returns.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate, for each local authority, the total amount saved in benefit expenditure arising from anti-fraud initiatives in the most recent year for which figures are available; if he will express the figures as a percentage of the total expenditure on social security benefits administered by each local authority; and if he will provide an aggregate estimate for Great Britain. [152845]

Mr. Pond: Estimates of savings in benefit expenditure by local authorities due to anti-fraud initiatives are not available at local authority or national level. It is not possible to readily estimate savings from the data the Department collects on detected overpayments. This is largely because it is not possible to know how long the overpayments would have continued for had they not been detected at that point in time.

Benefits

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of *(a)* the interaction between income support and disability benefits, *(b)* the complexity of this interaction and *(c)* whether eligible recipients are deterred from claiming disability related benefits by the complexity of the process. [153379]

Mr. Pond: Income support is intended to help people whose resources are insufficient to meet their day-to-day living expenses; it provides extra support to meet the needs of disabled customers with the automatic award of disability premiums. In addition, disability benefits, such as disability living allowance and attendance allowance, are fully disregarded.

Jobcentre Plus has worked to enhance services with the use of electronic interfaces; a new interface between disability living allowance and income support has been developed in order to improve services to those who claim both benefits. It is intended that the new interface will be put into operation later this year.

We do not believe these arrangements deter people eligible for benefit from taking up their entitlement.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how much was spent by his Department on incapacity benefit pilots in 2003; and what his estimate is of expenditure on such pilots in 2004; [153390]

(2) how much his Department will spend on incapacity benefit pilots in 2005. [153392]

Maria Eagle: "Pathways to Work—Helping People into Employment" Cm 5690 set out a strategy for enabling people on incapacity benefits to move into work. The first tranche of three pilot areas (Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute, and Derbyshire) went live from October 2003.

The second tranche of areas (Gateshead and South Tyneside, Somerset, Essex, and East Lancashire) are on track to go live in April.

Spending Review 2002 announced just under £100 million in additional funds for these pilots (£15 million for 2003–04 and £41 million for each of 2004–05 and 2005–06). £3.9 million was spent in the period April 2003 to December 2003; we estimate expenditure will be £7.45 million for January 2004 to March 2004, and £42.6 million for April 2004 to March 2005. These estimates include running costs, learning and development costs for personal advisers and other staff, the return to work credit, the NHS condition management programmes, and marketing and publicity costs.

Carer's Allowance

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to review pensioner carers' access to carer's allowance payments. [152810]

Maria Eagle: We have no current plans.

Pensioners have access to carer's allowance. Around 22,000 receive the benefit, in full or in part. Around 44,000 pensioner carers receive the additional amount for carers paid with pension credit.

Note:
Figures as at end August 2003, 5 per cent. sample rounded to nearest 1,000.

Source:
IAD Information Centre.

Child Poverty

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [154364]

Mr. Pond: The fifth annual 'Opportunity for all' (Cm 5956) report sets out the latest assessment of progress in tackling child poverty, showing significant progress.

As set out in "Tackling Child Poverty—Giving Every Child the Best Possible Start in Life", published in December 2001, the Government's strategy for tackling child poverty involves ensuring decent family incomes, with work for those who can and support for those who cannot, and providing support for parents. It also involves delivering high quality public services and harnessing the power and expertise of the voluntary and community sectors.

Based on the latest outturn data (for 2001–02) we have made significant progress on our PSA target to reduce the number of children in low-income households by a quarter by 2004–05. The 2003 Pre-Budget Report announced that the per child element of the Child Tax Credit will increase from April 2004 by £180 to £1,625 a year, equivalent to a weekly increase of £3.50.

As a result of this new investment, the Government is on track to meet its PSA target to reduce by a quarter the number of children in low-income households by 2004–05 on a before housing costs basis. The target is more challenging on an after housing costs basis. The nature of the target means that there are uncertainties either way. This extra investment will enable the Government to make progress step by step towards its goal to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020.

The 2003 Budget announced a Child Poverty Review to examine, for the next Spending Review, the welfare reform and public services changes needed to advance faster towards its long-term goals to halve and then eradicate child poverty. The review is under way, with a series of seminars having been held during the autumn covering issues such as ethnic minority groups, educational outcomes, parenting, early years services, health outcomes, supporting families with disabled children and deprived areas. The Review will feed into the 2004 Spending Review.

In December 2003 we published Measuring Child Poverty, which outlines our measure of child poverty for the long term, effective from 2004–05. A copy is available in the Library.

Child Support Agency

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many self-employed non-resident parents have failed to meet the required Child Support Agency calculated maintenance payments in the last 12 months; and how many of these cases remain unresolved. [147836]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to John Barrett dated 12 February 2004:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked how many self employed non-resident parents have failed to meet the required Child Support Agency calculated maintenance payments in the last 12 months; and how many of these cases remain unresolved.

The last period for which we have validated information is from March 2002 to February 2003. In that period the number of self-employed non-resident parents who had received an assessment but had not fully met their required payments totalled around 27,600. I am unable to say how many of these cases remain unresolved.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects the Child Support Agency computer system to be working at its planned level; and if he will make a statement. [149476]

Mr. Pond: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has placed reports on progress in implementing the new scheme in the Library.

Progress is dependent on the computer service provided by EDS meeting agreed standards. The Child Support Agency is working closely with EDS to resolve problems with the IT but cannot yet say how long this may take.

Tom Levitt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps against internet sites which exist to help people reduce or avoid their obligations to the Child Support Agency. [154002]

Mr. Pond: If it comes to light that a particular site contains incorrect information, is defamatory or advocates illegal action, the Department will take appropriate steps.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* representations he has received and *(b)* assessment he has made of the (i) human rights implications and (ii) possible grounds for legal complaint arising from the unequal Child Support Agency assessments made between clients prior to and after April 2002. [154215]

Mr. Pond: Like many hon. Members and their constituents, we are keen that everyone who has dealings with the Agency should benefit from the reforms. However, we will transfer old scheme cases only when we are sure the new scheme is working well. Where an old scheme assessment is in place, the old law and provisions made under it will continue to apply until the case is moved to the new scheme. We are satisfied that this approach is legal and correct.

Civil Servants (Transfer of Pensions)

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with those civil servants transferred from the Health and Safety Executive to Logica/CMG about their pensions scheme. [148736]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 20 January 2004]:* In line with normal practice Ministers have had no discussions with the former civil servants who transferred from the Health and Safety Executive to the private sector about their pensions scheme.

HSE's IT services were first contracted out in 1995 as part of the market testing policy of the previous administration. Although occupational pensions issues do not fall within the scope of the TUPE Regulations, the Government Actuary certified the Bull-Integris (hereafter "Bull") pension scheme as broadly comparable to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme. Staff were also provided with access to expert independent advice so that they could make informed choices about their pension arrangements.

The contract for HSE's IT services was re-let in 2001 and won by a consortium made of Logica/CMG and Computacenter. As a result, Bull transferred former HSE employees to either Logica/CMG or Computacenter (depending on their function). Although these issues are matters between the contractors, HSE encouraged Logica/CMG, Computacenter and Bull to come to a bulk transfer arrangement on the matter of pensions.

Logica/CMG have been unable to agree a bulk transfer of pension benefits from Bull in respect of employees past service with HSE and Bull. This is because such a transfer would result in staff being credited with a significantly reduced number of years in the CMG scheme.

However, because of concerns about this issue I have asked officials to look at the case and confirm to me that procedures and accountabilities have been properly followed. This is under way and I will write again when investigations have been concluded.

Compensation Awards

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reasons a compensation award counts as capital for benefits calculations. [150129]

Mr. Pond: Income-related benefits are intended to target help on those with the least resources. It is a long established principle that substantial amounts of capital should not be ignored when deciding entitlement to a benefit based on need and it is for this reason that all compensation payments are counted as capital.

However, compensation payments received and placed in trust for the injured person are disregarded when determining benefit entitlement.

Council Tax Benefit

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of administering council tax benefit payments in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* Scotland in each of the last five years; what the value was of council tax benefit payments made in (i) the United Kingdom and (ii) Scotland in each of those years; and what estimate he has made of the total amount of council tax benefit unclaimed in each of those years. [149782]

Mr. Pond: The available information regarding the cost of administering council tax benefit and the total value of council tax benefit payments is in the tables.

Cost of administering council tax benefit (in £ million)

	Great Britain	*Scotland*
1998–99	185.284	13.355
1999–2000	240.871	14.796
2000–01	219.162	14.644
2001–02	247.133	17.889

Note:
Figures for 2002–03 have not yet been finalised.
Source:
1. Scotland figures taken from Scottish Local Government Finance Statistics.
2. Figures for England provided by Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
3. Figures for Wales provided by the National Assembly for Wales.

Total value of council tax benefit payments (in £ million)

	Great Britain	*Scotland*
1998–99	2,452	303
1999–2000	2,511	307
2000–01	2,575	311
2001–02	2,686	316

Note:
Figures for 2002–03 have not yet been finalised.
Source:
Final audited subsidy returns sent to Department for Work and Pensions by local authorities.

Estimates of the amount of council tax benefit left unclaimed in Great Britain are available in the Department for Work and Pensions/Department of Social Security annual report entitled "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up". Statistics are presented on a financial year basis; the latest estimates relate to 2000–01. Copies of the publications are available in the Library.

Mr. Prosser: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of beneficiaries of abolishing the upper capital limit on council tax benefit for people aged 60 years and over; and what plans he has to introduce this change; [152795]

(2) what the basis is for setting the council tax benefit upper capital limit at £16,000 for pensioners; and when the limit was last uprated. [152796]

Mr. Pond: Council Tax Benefit has lower capital limits above which benefits are reduced and upper limits above which benefits cannot be paid. When the present scheme was introduced in April 1988, the upper capital limit was set at £6,000. It was subsequently increased to £8,000 on 30 May 1988 and to £16,000 on 1 April 1990.

The estimated annual cost of abolishing the upper capital limit is approximately £50 million, with around 100,000 beneficiaries. We have no current plans to change these arrangements; however, under the new Pension Credit, there is no upper capital limit.

Notes:

i. Costs are rounded to the nearest five million, beneficiaries are rounded to the nearest 25,000.

ii. Each beneficiary represents a benefit unit, which can be a single claimant or a couple; where the benefit unit is a couple, at least one member is aged 60 or over.

iii. Costs are estimated using the DWP Policy Simulation Model for 2004–05; this model is based on the 2001–02 Family Resources Survey data, uprated to 2004–05 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels, and is calibrated to latest published forecasts and policies.

iv. Costs arise from cases becoming newly entitled to council tax benefit as a result of abolishing the upper capital limit. The estimates above assume that those with significant amounts of capital are as likely to take up benefit entitlement as those currently entitled.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of pensioners were eligible for council tax benefit in each year since 2000 in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley. [154224]

Mr. Pond: The information requested is not available.

National figures of the number of the pensioners in receipt of council tax benefit, plus the estimated number that are entitled but not receiving benefit, can be obtained from the DWP report, "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up". The latest statistics relate to financial year 2000–01; a copy of the publication is held in the Library.

National results for 2001–02 will be released later this month.

Departmental Staff

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the proposals drafted by his Department's senior management team for up to 18,000 job cuts in his Department. [154876]

Maria Eagle: This is not a new development. Staff in the Department for Work and Pensions were originally advised in a letter from the Permanent Secretary in October 2002, that as part of the Department's modernisation programme, staffing levels would be reduced between 2003 to 2006. The plans were discussed with the trade unions at the time.

Departmental Staff (Fraud)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what amounts were involved in each case. [151999]

Mr. Pond: The Department does not record the information in the precise format requested. Such detail as is available is provided in the tables, which show the value of fraud and the outcome of investigation activity.

Information on the numbers of cases investigated for this type of suspected fraud (i.e. involving members of staff), is not routinely recorded separately from other benefit fraud investigations. Some investigations will inevitably conclude that there has not been any fraud in the individual case, and therefore no further action will be taken.

Table 1—1 April 2003 to 31 December 2003[1]

£

Case number	*Value of fraud*	*Outcome*
1	41,560.00	Officer prosecuted and sentenced to 15 months in prison
2	28,377.00	Officer prosecuted and sentenced to 200 hours community service
3	4,023.71	Officer dismissed
4	2,199.78	Officer dismissed
5	802.00	Officer resigned
6	No loss	Officer resigned
7	3,000.00	Officer resigned
8	No loss	Officer received a written reprimand
Total	79,962.49	

[1] Latest period for which information is available.

Table 2—2002–03

£

Case number	*Value of fraud*	*Outcome*
1	5,300.00	Officer dismissed
2	488.30	Officer dismissed
3	1,807.00	Written reprimand and banned from progression for two years
4	3,469.53	Officer dismissed
5	135,000.00	Officer prosecuted and sentenced to 27 months in prison
6	2,666.00	Officer dismissed and prosecuted with custodial sentence
7	2,600.00	Officer dismissed, prosecution pending
Total	151,330.83	

Table 3—2001–02

£

Case number	*Value of fraud*	*Outcome*
1	2,346.00	Written reprimand valid for five years
2	2,660.72	Officer dismissed
3	5,000.00	Officer resigned
4	2,904.00	Officer resigned
5	3,005.00	Officer dismissed
6	180,000.00	Prosecution resulting in custodial sentence
Total	195,915.72	

Table 4—2000–01[2]

£

Case number	*Value of fraud*	*Outcome*
1	3,963.00	Information no longer available
2	4,272.33	Officer resigned
3	2,18.57	No disciplinary action taken
4	887.18	Prosecuted, conditional discharge, officer resigned
5	426.14	Formal reprimand for five years
6	1,807.10	Downgraded, formal reprimand and promotion bar
7	3,697.06	Information no longer available
8	2,820.18	Prosecuted by police resulting in community service and order to repay
9	7,631.37	Prosecuted resulting in probation and community service
10	2,140.00	Information no longer available
11	9,535.84	Prosecution resulting in community service and probation
Total	37,398.77	

[2] The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001. Figures for earlier periods relate to the former Department of Social Security.

Table 5—1999–2000

£

Case number	*Value of fraud*	*Outcome*
1	210,000.00	Prosecution resulting in custodial sentence
2	30,000.00	Prosecution
3	75.80	Officer dismissed
4	1,753.00	Prosecution resulting in probation and community service
5	4,462.97	Information no longer available
6	8,820.77	Prosecution resulting in custodial sentence
7	144.20	Officer resigned
8	134.41	Officer resigned
9	4,224.28	Officer resigned
10	957.56	Prosecution resulting in fine
11	17,880.80	Prosecution resulting in 150 hours community service order
12	1,947.08	Information no longer available
13	3,690.80	Officer dismissed
14	3,255.54	Officer dismissed
15	3,186.00	Officer resigned
Total	290,533.21	

Elderly People (Benefits)

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action is being taken to ensure that elderly people receive the benefits to which they are entitled. [153819]

Malcolm Wicks: We want all eligible pensioners to take up their entitlement and initiatives are in place to encourage them to do so.

We are currently in the main phase of our marketing campaign for pension credit and aim to have at least 3 million households in receipt of pension credit by 2006. By June 2004, we will have written to all pensioner households, to explain about the new entitlement. Direct mail is being supported by extensive TV and press advertising. From May, we intend to focus campaign activity on those pensioners who are likely to be entitled but who have not responded.

The Pension Service Local Service is playing a key role, particularly in encouraging pensioners who are less likely to take up their entitlement to apply. We continue to work closely with organisations such as Help the Aged and Age Concern/at both national and local level, and with local authorities.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote take up of housing benefit and council tax benefit. In order to encourage take up of council tax benefit, which has historically been lower than for other income-related benefits, we have launched a take-up campaign to help support local authorities in encouraging those who may be entitled to claim.

The introduction of pension credit also means around 320,000 pensioner households will be newly entitled to council tax benefit. To help facilitate take up of housing benefit and council tax benefit applicants for pension credit who also want to claim these benefits are sent a claim form to return to their local authority. We have also recently introduced a shortened version of this claim form for pensioners to make the process of claiming even easier.

Those pensioners who are entitled to the pension credit guarantee credit have linked entitlement to housing benefit and council tax benefit which can meet up to 100 per cent. of their rent and council tax liability. The Department is improving the take-up of attendance allowance in a targeted and well directed way. We have removed a major barrier to people claiming attendance allowance by introducing a new claim form that is much shorter, personalised and more responsive to customer needs. New information technology has been introduced throughout the organisation to speed up the decision making process and enable a better and more professional service.

We are also working closer with partners such as local authorities and welfare rights organisations who are able to advise people about disability benefits in a far more targeted way than would be possible through any mass disability awareness campaigns.

Employment (Older People)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on older people in the workplace. [154382]

Malcolm Wicks: Our Pensions Green Paper 'Simplicity, security and choice: Working and saving for retirement' reinforced our commitment to extend employment opportunities for older people, with a range of proposals including providing extra back-to-work help for over 50s, and a number of changes to tax and pension rules which will give individuals more choice and opportunity to stay in work longer. We have

pledged to tackle age discrimination in the workplace, and we will be introducing age legislation covering employment, vocational training and guidance by 2006. We have also made it clear that in the forthcoming age legislation compulsory retirement ages are likely to be unlawful, unless employers can show they are objectively justified. Employers will therefore need to adopt more flexible approaches to retirement.

We are already encouraging employers to adopt non-ageist employment practices through our Age Positive Campaign. The campaign raises employers' awareness of the business benefits of an age diverse workforce and encourages a flexible approach to retirement to open up choice and opportunity for individuals to stay in work longer.

In 2002 we published an updated version of the Code of Practice 'Age Diversity at work: a practical guide for business'. This sets out the standards for non-ageist approaches to recruitment, training, promotion, redundancy and retirement. The code was first developed in 1999 with leading organisations including the CBI, TUC, the Employers Forum on Age and Age Concern. Evaluation shows that from 1999 to 2001 the number of companies using age in recruitment had already fallen from 27 per cent. to 13 per cent. and the number of companies having a policy against employing older workers had dropped from 14 per cent. to 7 per cent.

Since then we have continued to promote the business case for recruiting, training and retaining older workers through the Age Positive campaign and website, www.agepositive.gov.uk, and workshops for smaller businesses. Our research publications include 'Good Practice in the Recruitment and Retention of Older Workers' (December 2001), 'Flexible Retirement: A Snapshot of Large Employers' Initiatives' (June 2002), 'Working after State Pension Age' (2003) and 'Factors affecting the Labour Market Participation of Older Workers' (2004). Copies of these reports are available in the Library.

From Spring 1997 to Spring 2003 our policies have helped increase the employment rate for people aged 50 to State Pension age from over 64 per cent. to over 70 per cent., with nearly 900,000 more people aged 50 and over in work. This increase has been faster than the increase in the overall employment rate. Under New Deal 50 plus over 98,000 people aged over 50 have moved off benefits and gone back to work from April 2000 to March 2003, claiming the programme's financial help. We will continue to build on this to further increase the employment rate of older workers, who have a wealth of skills and experience that can benefit individual businesses and the economy as a whole.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the unemployment rates for the 55-plus age group in *(a)* Coventry, *(b)* the West Midlands and *(c)* the United Kingdom. [154383]

Mr. Browne: We are providing a wide range of services through Jobcentre Plus to help people aged over 55 looking for work. This includes job-search help and advice, training, and in-work financial support. These programmes have contributed to the reduction in the level of unemployment. The available information is in the table.

Unemployment rate of people aged 55 or over[1]

	West Midlands	*UK*
1997	5.5	5.5
2002	3.5	3.3

[1] Figures show the unemployed, based on the International Labour Organisation definition, as a proportion of economically active people.

Note:

Data has not been aligned with Census of Population data.

Source:

Labour Force Survey, four quarter averages

EU Citizens (Benefits)

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the total additional cost of all benefits payable in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 financial years to citizens of EU accession states residing in the UK. [150083]

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost to the United Kingdom public funds of those people from Poland who elect to travel to the UK from 1 May who will be eligible for social security benefits and state pensions. [147704]

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the additional cost of pension and social security payments to citizens of the 10 EU applicant states after they join in May. [151307]

Mr. Pond: We are considering what measures we should take to prevent people from the acceding states from coming to the UK to take advantage of our benefit system.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact on the UK labour market after 1 May of the absence of transitional restrictions in the UK for the nationals of the EU accession states. [151068]

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) to which *(a)* financial and *(b)* material benefits citizens of the EU accession states will be entitled in the UK after 1 May; [154039]

(2) to which benefits dependent children of citizens of the EU accession states resident in the UK will be entitled after 1 May. [154031]

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether he is proposing any changes to the regulations governing social security entitlements for the citizens of *(a)* present and *(b)* future EU countries; [154331]

(2) what changes to the social security and benefit system will be made to take account of the free movement of workers and dependants from the EU accession states from 1 May. [154095]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* We are considering what measures we should take to prevent people from the acceding states from coming to the UK to take advantage of our benefit system.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to what benefits citizens of other EU countries are entitled after they have been resident in the UK for three months. [151158]

Mr. Pond: We are considering what measures we should take to prevent people from the acceding states from coming to the UK to take advantage of our benefit system.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) under which provisions of the European Union Accession Treaty people from Poland will be permitted from 1 May to reside and work freely in the United Kingdom and be in receipt of social security benefits and state pensions when required; and if he will make a statement; [147702]

(2) what steps he is taking to prevent Polish citizens arriving in Britain after 1 May from being eligible for social security benefits and state pensions; and what discussions he has had on the matter with his European Union counterparts. [147705]

Mr. Pond: We are considering what measures we should take to prevent people from the acceding states from coming to the UK to take advantage of our benefit system.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what UK social security entitlements citizens of other EU countries have if they reside in the UK; and if he will make a statement; [146612]

(2) what UK pension rights citizens of other EU countries have if they reside in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [146613]

Mr. Pond: We are considering what measures we should take to prevent people from the acceding states from coming to the UK to take advantage of our benefit system.

Family Support

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children in families receiving *(a)* Income Support and *(b)* Jobseeker's Allowance are receiving support through (i) the Tax Credits system and (ii) Income Support personal allowances; and if he will make a statement on the transition between the two systems. [151014]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The latest broadly comparable Child Tax Credit, and Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance figures available are for August 2003.

In August 2003 there were 2,224,900 dependants in families receiving Income Support, and 177,000 dependants in families receiving Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance[1]. These figures include dependents in families receiving child allowances for dependants and those in families receiving Tax Credits.

There were 186,400 dependants in families receiving Tax Credits and Income Support, and 90,000 dependants in families receiving Tax Credits and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance[2].

My right hon. Friend the Paymaster General will make a statement shortly on our plans for bringing Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance claimants with children into the Child Tax Credit.

Notes:
1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.
2. 'Dependants' are children and young persons aged up to 19.

Sources:
[1] Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance; five per cent. sample of the benefit computer system, Income Support at 31 August 2003, Jobseeker's Allowance at 14 August 2003.
[2] Tax Credits: Inland Revenue; mixed sample of 10 per cent. of single adults and 20 per cent. of couples claiming Tax Credits at 29 August 2003.

Income Support

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will enable recipients of income support to put aside some of their benefit to save for the purchase of a Motability vehicle without their savings affecting their entitlement to income support. [151783]

Mr. Pond: Income-related benefits are intended to target help on those with the least resources. It is a long established principle that substantial amounts of capital should not be ignored when deciding entitlement to a benefit based on need, and it is for this reason that all savings are counted as capital. Claimants are free to spend their capital as they wish, so it would be inappropriate to have different rules for the treatment of capital based simply on a declaration of its intended use.

However, there will not usually be a need for a person to have significant savings in order to lease or purchase a suitable vehicle through the Motability scheme. Generally, the cost of a suitable vehicle is met through the higher rate mobility component of their disability living allowance or war pensioners' mobility supplement. In some cases, where the cost of the chosen vehicle cannot be met from the weekly benefit payments, an advance payment must be made at the start of the relevant agreement. Motability has funds available to make discretionary payments to help meet the cost of an advance payment where Motability considers the extra cost is necessary to provide a vehicle to meet a person's basic mobility needs.

Information Technology

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether all Information Technology hardware and software products are being properly utilised in his Department. [151058]

Mr. Browne: The Department's IT contracts require suppliers to co-operate fully with any audit requirements necessary for the Department to satisfy itself that supplier obligations are being discharged responsibly.

Internally there are safeguards built into the Department's systems. The approach to Digital Office Infrastructure (DOI) has been designed to prevent the unauthorised installation of software on the

Department's systems. For the benefit systems there are automated tools that allow the Department to scrutinise audit trail data to prevent or detect improper use of systems. In addition there are a series of management checks that are carried out regularly on key business systems.

The Department aims to follow OGC guidance and best practice. Regarding the recommendations made in the NAO report "Purchasing and Managing Software Licences" the Department has already addressed the issues identified or has taken steps to address them.

IT Services

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department's main IT service provider paid Microsoft on the Department's behalf in licensing fees in each of the last three years; how much has been budgeted for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [147547]

Mr. Browne: The Department's main IT service provider purchases Microsoft licences through Computacenter on the Department's behalf. The figures for the last three years are as follows:

2001–02—£17,342,701.15

2002–03—£2,500,668.03.

The budgeted figures for 2003–04 and 2004–05 are as follows:

2003–04—£14,543,452.52

2004–05—£500,000.00.

The fluctuations in spend and budgeting are due to the way in which the rollout of hardware under the Digital Office Infrastructure (DOI) project is scheduled. This project is replacing all office desktop PCs and the software to operate them. It is the software that accounts for the bulk of the expenditure with Microsoft and by 2004–05 the refresh will be complete which explains the low forecast of £500,000.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what definition of the term "merger dividend" he uses in relation to the setting up of Jobcentre Plus, with particular regard to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight district; [151608]

(2) what merger dividend is to be gained from the organisational changes to his Department in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. [152148]

Mr. Browne: The Department for Work and Pensions was created in April 2001 from a merger of the former Department of Social Security and parts of the Department for Education and Employment. One of our key priorities is to make the best possible use of taxpayers' money. Around 1,100 Jobcentres and 400 social security offices inherited from the former Benefits Agency and Employment Service are being replaced with a network of around 1,000 integrated Jobcentre Plus offices. By bringing together two organisations we can derive a merger dividend because it is possible to upgrade services and teams such as HR, Finance and Management Support.

Moreover, The Jobcentre Plus service brings job-finding and benefit services together under one roof. These new integrated offices will eventually replace all the existing Jobcentres and social security offices and this process will enable us to rationalise our estate by closing offices that are unsuitable for delivering the new service or where there are two offices covering the same area. For example in Hampshire, Liphook Office has been closed and a new office opened in Bordon. Hon. Members in Hampshire were consulted in the service delivery plans for the district in September 2002.

The Pension Service is delivering a centralised service to pensioners supported by a local service and is closing its presence within sites shared with other parts of the organisation as work is migrated to pension centres.

Jobcentre Plus/Pension Service (Relocation)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what account was taken of the Rural Plan in making decisions about the relocation of *(a)* Jobcentre Plus and *(b)* Pension Service offices. [151532]

Mr. Browne: Jobcentre Plus and The Pension Service are modernising the services we provide to our customers. Increased accessibility is one of our key objectives in modernising welfare delivery. Modernisation is helping us to deliver the commitment made in the Rural White paper to ensure access to 'high quality public services—services often delivered in new ways, and through new outlets'. We are committed to ensuring that everyone is able to access our services, whether they live in urban or rural areas. We are providing improved customer access through telephone centres, the internet and new, dedicated caller offices.

Decisions about where services are delivered by the Department are based upon consultation with our partners such as local authorities and Regional Development Agencies, and reflect local circumstances and most importantly, the needs of the local community. The consideration of rural issues is an integral part of the consultation process. The Rural Proofing checklist produced by the Countryside Agency forms part of the initial planning process and, where appropriate, the Countryside Agency itself is consulted as a stakeholder.

DWP produce an internal annual Rural Proofing Report for the Countryside Agency; this includes examples of how the Department has addressed service delivery issues in rural areas. DWP also regularly discusses policy development and implementation with DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and the Countryside Agency. For example, DWP provided detailed information about development and delivery of our services for last year's rural-proofing report by the Countryside Agency. A copy of the Countryside Agency's Rural Proofing Report for 2002–3 can be found in the Library.

New Deal

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent by his Department on the New Deal for Young People in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [153388]

Mr. Browne: The information is in the table.

New Deal for Young People

Financial year	*Spend (£ million)*[1]
2001–02	308
2002–03[2]	339

[1] Includes programme and administrative spend.
[2] Estimated outturn.
Note:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest million.
Source:
Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2003.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent by his Department on the New Deal for Disabled People in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [153389]

Mr. Browne: Expenditure on New Deal for Disabled People for 2001–02 was £10 million; for 2002–03, the estimated expenditure was £27 million.

Source:
Departmental report and the DWP Annual Report and Accounts.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research has been carried out into the wage levels of New Deal leavers; and if he will make a statement. [153459]

Mr. Browne: Information on the wage levels of New Deal leavers is not collected.

Information on the hourly take home pay of people who had left New Deal for Young People (NDYP) to go into employment was included in a national survey of participants on NDYP in 1999.

The report of this survey (ESR44:March 2001) New Deal for Young People: National Survey of Participants: Stage 1 by Alex Bryson, Genevieve Knight and Michael White of the Policy Studies Institute, is available in the Library.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many lone parents are benefiting from the New Deal in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [154744]

Mr. Browne: By the end of September 2003, 480 lone parents in the Chorley constituency and 6,480 in Lancashire[1] had found work through the New Deal for Lone Parents.

New Deal for Lone Parents is just one of a raft of measures that we have introduced to help lone parents gain independence through moving into work. These measures have together helped to reduce the number of lone parents on income support by over 16 per cent. since May 1997.

[1] Figures are East Lancashire and West Lancashire Jobcentre Plus Districts.

Part-time Workers (Pensions)

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures have been introduced since 1997 to improve pension rights for part-time workers. [153602]

Malcolm Wicks: We have introduced the state second pension (S2P) which reformed the state earnings-related pension scheme (SERPS) in April 2002. Compared to SERPS, S2P gives more help to employees on low or moderate earnings (£4,004 to £25,600 in 2003–04 terms). It also helps certain carers and disabled people whose annual earnings are below £4,004, or have no earnings at all. So it will provide extra income in retirement for some part-time workers.

Since 1997, we have also made it possible for part-timers to make pension contributions at a relatively low cost, and on a flexible basis, with the introduction of stakeholder pensions.

We have also taken steps to improve access to occupational pension schemes for part-time workers. We have implemented the EU Directive 97/81/EC (the Part-time Work Directive) by introducing the Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 (SI No. 1551/2000) which came into force on 1 July 2000. Under these regulations part-time workers have the right in principle not to be treated less favourably than full-time workers of the same employer who work under the same type of employment contract.

In addition, as a result of rulings by the courts, part time workers can claim backdated access to occupational pension schemes where their previous exclusion from the relevant scheme amounted to indirect sex discrimination. Claims can be backdated to 1 April 1976 or the start of employment, if later, subject to paying relevant contributions.

Pension Credit

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* state basic pension and *(b)* state second pension entitlement credits are available for carers (i) below the age of 50, (ii) above the age of 50 and (iii) above the age of 60. [154557]

Malcolm Wicks: People in receipt of Carer's Allowance are credited with National Insurance contributions each week which protect their entitlement to basic State Pension and other contributory benefits. Carers for the sick and severely disabled who are unable to get Carer's Allowance may get Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP) which helps to protect entitlement to basic State Pension. Carers who are getting Child Benefit for a child under 16 may also be helped by HRP.

For State Second Pension purposes, qualifying carers who earn less than £11,200 in 2003–04 and including those with no earnings at all, are treated as if they had earned this amount and will accrue entitlement to State Second Pension.

No distinction is made by age although people over State Pension Age cannot benefit from credits or HRP.

Note:
Qualifying carers for State Second Pension purposes are those who receive Child Benefit for a child under six, or are below State Pension age and entitled to Carer's Allowance or Home Responsibilities Protection for caring for a severely ill or disabled person.

Pension Schemes

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what protection is afforded to workers

who have lost their pension rights after their employer became insolvent under clause 8 of the EU Insolvency Directive. [153930]

Malcolm Wicks: As has been confirmed by the European Commission, we fully meet our obligations under Article 8 of the Insolvency Directive, as successive Governments have done since the Directive was adopted in 1980.

Under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Pensions Scheme Act 1993, the Redundancy Payments Directorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, makes insolvency payments from the National Insurance Fund (NIF) to qualifying former employees. The amounts payable from the NIF are subject to statutory upper limits. In addition, the Pensions Act 1995 requires salary-related schemes to meet the Minimum Funding Requirement (MFR), and provides for a statutory priority order for the distribution of a scheme's assets if a scheme that is required to meet the MFR winds up.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what obligations are placed on actuaries or trustees who are winding-up pension schemes to pay the guaranteed minimum pension. [153787]

Malcolm Wicks: Where a scheme is winding up the trustees will need to realise the assets of the scheme, pay its outstanding debts and expenses and take steps to secure the benefits of scheme members –including members' Guaranteed Minimum Pensions (GMPs).

The assets must be applied in the order set out in scheme rules, or where the scheme is salary-related and subject to the Minimum Funding Requirement, in accordance with the statutory priority order in Section 73 of the Pensions Act 1995. After meeting scheme expenses and debts to third parties, the current (transitional) priority order is Additional Voluntary Contributions, then pensions in payment, followed by accrued contracted-out rights (including GMP), pension increases and finally non-contracted out rights.

If there are insufficient assets to satisfy all of the liabilities in a particular category of the priority order then the liabilities in that category must be satisfied proportionately.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate public expenditure on the state second pension in each year from 2006–07 to 2015–16 based on *(a)* present policies and *(b)* no new state second pension entitlement being accrued in respect of contributions made from 2005–06 onwards. [154870]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is set out in the following table.

Projected expenditure on the state second pension based on (a) current policies and (b) if accruals were to cease from April 2005 onwards—£ billion, 2003–04 price terms

	(a)	*(b)*
2006–07	0.3	0.2
2007–08	0.4	0.3
2008–09	0.6	0.4
2009–10	0.8	0.5
2010–11	1.0	0.6
2011–12	1.2	0.7
2012–13	1.4	0.8
2013–14	1.7	0.8
2014–15	1.9	0.9
2015–16	2.2	1.0

Notes:

1. The projected expenditure to pensioners shown above does not allow for (i) expenditure on state second pension paid alongside bereavement benefits to those below state pension age, (ii) expenditure on contracted-out rebates, or (iii) any effects on income-related benefit expenditure of the various policies considered.
2. The projected expenditure has been calculated on a consistent basis to that used for the projections in the Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Fund as at April 2000 (Cm 6008), assuming real earnings growth of 2 per cent. a year. No allowance has been made for the effects of the most recent (2002-based) population projections, or any other information which has become available since the results underlying the Quinquennial Review were prepared.
3. The projected expenditure relates to the GB National Insurance Fund (Northern Ireland has a separate Fund).

"Riding the Benefits Rollercoaster"

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will respond to the Citizens Advice Scotland Report, "Riding the Benefits Rollercoaster"; and if he will make a statement. [153797]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* We recognise the valuable work of Citizens Advice Scotland and will take account of the findings in their report, "Riding the Benefits Roller-coaster", in monitoring and developing relevant policies and practices.

We have no plans to respond formally; however, my hon. Friend the Minister for Disabled People responded to many of the points raised by the report in a recent debate in Westminster Hall, 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 208–29WH.

Stakeholder Pension Scheme

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out the circumstances in which voluntary contributions to a stakeholder pension scheme are treated as voluntary deprivation of capital for the purposes of Income Support; and if he will make a statement. [150876]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* If a person makes a voluntary contribution of capital to a stakeholder pension with the intention of securing or increasing entitlement to Income Support, he may be considered to have deprived himself of that capital. Decisions are based on the particular circumstances of each case and there is a right of appeal against an unfavourable decision.

Train Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155162]

Mr. Andrew Smith: I last used the train, in connection with my ministerial duties, on 13 January 2004, when I travelled from London to Bradford and back.

All ministerial travel on official business is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in Travel by Ministers.

Vaccine Damage Payment Act 1979

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claims under the Vaccine Damage Payment Act 1979 were made in each year since 2000; and how many were successful. [153856]

Maria Eagle: The numbers of claims made under the Act are set out in the table.

Year	*Claims Received*	*Claims Successful*
2000	171	1
2001	176	2
2002	[1]406	8
2003	183	0

[1] The figure for 2002 is so much higher than other years as a result of the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) passed in June, extending the time limits for claiming and reducing the disability threshold. The order made provision for past claimants who had been turned down on the conditions revised by the RRO to make a further claim. 571 such cases were identified and, to date 334 such claims have been received.

Welfare Modernisation Fund

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to note 9, page 25 of the report by the Government Actuary on the drafts of the Social Security Benefits Uprating Order 2004 (Cm 6117), how much the one-off payment to the Welfare Modernisation Fund was; and if he will make a statement. [154830]

Mr. Browne: The report by the Government Actuary on the drafts of the Social Security Benefits Uprating Order 2004 (Cm 6117) refers to recoveries by the Department for Work and Pensions from the National Insurance Fund for the administrative cost of national insurance benefits. These costs include expenditure on modernising the Department's infrastructure, provided by the Welfare Modernisation Fund. The amount secured by the Department through the spending review for the Welfare Modernisation Fund in 2003–04 was £680 million. Of this some £63 million was recovered from the National Insurance Fund for modernisation. These recoveries will continue over the life of the Department's modernisation programme.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have received winter fuel payments in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the north-east and *(e)* the UK in respect of 2003–04; and what the value of such payments is in each case. [153227]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on individual constituencies for 2003–04 will not be available until this winter's exercise is complete but will be provided to the hon. Member and placed in the Library when it becomes available.

To date, there have been 11,606,326 winter fuel payments made to UK residents for the winter 2003–04 at a cost of £1,937,989,500.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have received winter fuel payments in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley in each of the last three years; and what the value of such payment was in each case. [153841]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the table.

Region	*Number of Payments*	*Value(£)*
Winter 2002–03		
North West	1,349,470	204,173,800
Lancashire	236,990	35,227,700
Chorley	18,625	2,754,700
Winter 2001–02		
North West	1,336,465	202,163,500
Lancashire	233,025	34,601,400
Chorley	18,125	2,676,800
Winter 2000–01		
North West	1,327,910	200,923,000
Lancashire	229,880	34,120,300
Chorley	17,630	2,606,300

Note:
Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

Workstep Programme

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many disabled people who had participated in the Workstep programme gained employment in *(a)* 1999, *(b)* 2000, *(c)* 2001, *(d)* 2002 and *(e)* 2003; [153386]

(2) how much was spent by his Department on the Workstep programme in *(a)* 1999, *(b)* 2000, *(c)* 2001, *(d)* 2002 and *(e)* 2003. [153387]

Maria Eagle: Workstep was introduced on 1 April 2001 to replace the former Supported Employment Programme. Workstep provides in-work support for disabled people who have more complex barriers to finding and keeping a job, but who, with the right support, can work effectively and develop in their job. Where it is appropriate, individual supported employees may also progress to unsupported employment.

The programme is managed by Jobcentre Plus, which contracts with over 240 local authorities, voluntary organisations, Remploy Ltd. and private sector organisations. Supported employees work in mainstream employment with a range of organisations. In addition, some are employed in supported factories and businesses run as part of the programme.

Since it started, the core funding allocated to Workstep has remained broadly constant at around £60 million a year. An additional £37.2 million over three years 2001 to 2004, was made available to expand the programme and to support providers to modernise and develop their delivery of the programme.

The available information on the number of people supported through Workstep is in the following tables:

Number of places filled on Workstep contracts

	2001–02	2002–03
Non-Remploy (number of contracted places filled)	11,852	12,133
Remploy (number of people on programme)	10,523	9,543
Total	22,375	21,676

Number of people progressing to unsupported employment

	2001–02	2002–03
Non-Remploy	554	534
Remploy	1,246	1,610
Total	1,800	2,144

Note:
The non-Remploy figures shown in the first table represent the number of contracted places filled and are not a headcount (two part-time participants would equal one filled place.
Source:
DWP data.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many disabled people employed by his Department are supported by the Workstep programme. [153391]

Maria Eagle: As of October 2003, 239 people were supported by Workstep and working within the Department for Work and Pensions. Of these, 211 were directly employed by the Department.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

Departmental Staff

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Advocate-General how many staff work in the office of the Advocate-General. [R] [154169]

The Advocate-General for Scotland: At present, there are two members of staff in the Private Office; four members of staff in the Legal Secretariat to the Advocate-General (of whom three are qualified Scots lawyers) and 29 in the Office of Solicitor to the Advocate-General (of whom 17 are qualified Scots lawyers). These figures represent full staffing levels.

SCOTLAND

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150256]

Mr. Darling: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1294W.

Cross-border Public Authorities

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what cross-border public authorities exercise functions in Scotland; and when he last met the chair of each authority. [154482]

Mrs. McGuire: Under the Scotland Act 1998 (Cross-Border Public Authorities) (Specification) Order 1999 (SI 1999/1319), 68 bodies were designated as cross border public authorities.

Certain other bodies are also able to exercise functions in devolved areas in or as regards Scotland in addition to other functions.

My right hon. Friend and I often meet members of a number of cross-border public authorities in the course of our ministerial duties.

Pre-Budget Report

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many copies of the leaflet, "What the Pre-Budget Report means for Scotland", have been produced; and what the costs of *(a)* producing and *(b)* distributing the document were. [153991]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* HM Treasury produced 1,500 leaflets on the pre-Budget report for each of the 12 countries and regions of the UK at a total cost of £2,100.

The cost to the Scotland Office of distributing the Scotland leaflets, comprising staff (including on-costs), postage and materials costs, was approximately £150.

Scottish Economy

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the prospects for the Scottish economy. [153301]

Mrs. McGuire: The prospects for the Scottish economy are good. Unemployment is around its lowest level for a generation and employment is close to a record high. Growth figures have recently been revised upwards to better reflect real changes in the economy. Inflation and interest rates are low by historical standards. There is a growing consensus among business surveys pointing towards a continued strengthening of business activity in Scotland in both services and manufacturing. Furthermore, independent forecasters predict above-trend growth continuing in 2004 and 2005.

Scottish Parliament Members

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has collated on the number of people in Scotland who, by the end of each month of the consultation period, had *(a)* supported and *(b)* opposed the maintenance of the number of MSPs. [154875]

Mrs. McGuire: The responses to the consultation on the size of the Scottish Parliament were not collated on a monthly basis. The former Secretary of State for Scotland, my right hon. Friend the Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Mrs. Liddell), referred to the responses in her oral statement to the House on 18 December 2002, *Official Report*, column 859, and a summary of the responses was placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Agriculture Subsidies

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what quantitative assessment her Department has made of the effect of EU and US agriculture subsidies on *(a)* gross national product and *(b)* per capita income in developing countries. [149111]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The best source of information on this topic are the large number of studies which have already been undertaken by international organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD and the OECD, and by charitable organisations such as Oxfam. The work of these organisations demonstrates through individual case studies the severe adverse effects which dumping of subsidised agricultural products on world markets can have on developing country economies. It remains, however, very difficult to make an accurate quantitative economic assessment of the overall impact of dumping of subsidised agricultural produce on developing country markets. The World Bank have, however, estimated that the comprehensive reform of all aspects of agricultural policies in developed countries could boost the income of developing countries by as much as $100 billion.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff in her Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved were in each of the cases listed. [152423]

Ms Hewitt: The Department of Trade and Industry have no record of staff members being investigated, suspended, dismissed, prosecuted or convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in the last six years.

Business Support

Mr. Pollard: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department has taken since 1997 to reduce the administrative burden on small and medium-sized enterprises of compliance with VAT regulations; and how many companies are eligible to benefit from these steps. [153149]

Nigel Griffiths: The UK has the best VAT threshold in the EU allowing 2 million of the smallest businesses remain outside the VAT net altogether.

Several special schemes are aimed at simplifying VAT for small business:

the Flat Rate Scheme available to businesses with turnovers up to £150,000 can benefit up to 700,000 SMEs;

the Cash Accounting Scheme allows businesses to complete their VAT returns on the basis of payments received and made, rather than sales invoices issued and purchase invoices received;

The Annual Accounting Scheme replaces four VAT returns a year with one only. This open to all businesses with a turnover of £150,000 or less, and open to businesses who have been registered for 12 months with a taxable turnover of £600,000. These two measures are used by approximately 159,000 businesses.

Mr. Pollard: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when Mr. David Franklin was appointed as a small and medium-sized enterprises adviser to the Government; and in what capacity. [153264]

Nigel Griffiths: There is no record of David Franklin being appointed as a small and medium-sized enterprises adviser and he is not paid by the Government.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to reform the Small Business Loan Scheme; and if she will make a statement. [153539]

Nigel Griffiths: Teresa Graham is currently leading an Independent Review of the Small Firms Loan Guarantee. Recommendations will be published in summer 2004.

Company Directors

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many proceedings in the public interest for the disqualification of company directors *(a)* were brought and *(b)* resulted in a disqualification in each year since 1997; and how many disqualifications were of directors of companies with (i) less than and (ii) more than 250 employees. [143041]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Listed as follows are the total number of proceedings brought, in the public interest, for the disqualification of directors and the outcome in disqualification orders or undertakings.

	Proceedings brought	*Number of disqualifications*
1997–98	1,419	1,267
1998–99	1,332	1,284
1999–2000	1,497	1,540
2000–01	1,456	1,548
2001–02	1,575	1,761
2002–03	1,775	1,594

The table shows the number of Disqualification Orders and Undertakings (2001–02 onwards) made under Section 6 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act.

On information obtained from redundancy payments; there are no figures for the number of employees for companies of disqualified directors and the answer to the (i) and (ii) could be compiled only at disproportionate cost

Corporate Social Responsibility

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with her European counterparts on corporate social responsibility issues. [154096]

Mr. Timms: I met with the Italian Minister for Welfare in April last year as part of a bilateral seminar held in Rome where we signed a joint statement on Corporate Social Responsibility. Following that event, I met with my European counterparts at the CSR conference organised in Venice in November 2003 as part of the Italian Presidency. In addition I spoke at a CSR conference in Norway where I met my Norwegian counterpart. At official level the Department also keeps

in touch with fellow members states through membership of the High Level Group of National Social Representatives on CSR.

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with industry representatives on corporate social responsibility issues. [154097]

Mr. Timms: I have regular meetings with representatives from business where CSR issues are discussed. These contacts include individual meetings with business leaders as well as CSR related conferences and events. In addition DTI officials keep in touch on CSR matters with business and business organisations such as Business in the Community and CBI.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she has met representatives from the UN Global Compact to discuss the global future of corporate social responsibility. [154247]

Mr. Timms: I have not met representatives of the Global Compact but the Government support this valuable initiative of Kofi Annan the UN Secretary General. My officials and FCO colleagues have maintained a close and constructive relationship with the Global Compact team to help encourage and support further developments to ensure its full potential can be realised. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has contributed £105,331 to the costs of the Global Compact office over financial years 2002–04. The Department recently contributed £10,000 to an independent study commissioned by the team to assess the effectiveness of the initiative to help inform decisions about its future direction. The FCO has also contributed financially to Global Compact supported projects in China and South Africa. Through its participation in the donors' meetings in New York, the UK Mission at the UN has been closely involved in discussions and advice about the compact's future strategy and activities.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations she has recently held with business leaders to identify priorities for action in Corporate Social Responsibility; what her priorities for action in CSR are; and what incentives she will provide to businesses to encourage them to comply with her Department's CSR guidelines. [154248]

Mr. Timms: I have regular meetings with business leaders where CSR issues are discussed.

The Government's priorities for action were set out in our Business and Society report published in May 2002. We intend to publish a further report identifying progress and outlining current priorities for Government in facilitating the spread of CSR practice.

The Government wish to see business take greater account of the social and environmental impact of its activities, so that CSR becomes part of normal practice. Our role is to provide the framework which stimulates business voluntarily to raise their performance beyond minimum legal standards. Any government interventions need to be carefully considered, well-designed and targeted. On that basis we will consider opportunities to increase and incentives adoption and reporting of CSR, including best practice guidance, and, where appropriate, through intelligent regulation and fiscal incentives. I expect to receive next month a report from a working group chaired by Clive Mather, Chairman of Shell UK, on the promotion of CSR skills in the UK, including consideration of the proposal for a CSR academy.

Credit Records

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure that people are not disadvantaged through living at an address at which the previous occupants had poor credit records; and if she will make a statement. [153367]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Businesses, including credit reference agencies, holding personal data about individuals on their computer systems have to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. They must register with the Information Commissioner and comply with the principles of the Act. The Commissioner can take enforcement action against businesses who do not comply.

When a credit reference agency receives a legitimate request for information about an individual they can provide information about:

The individual;

Other family members living within the same household or other people who have lived as part of the same family and;

People with the same, or very similar name, living at the same address or who have, in the past, lived with them at the same address or last address.

Agencies must not report information about other people who have lived at the same address but not at the same time as the individual or where it is otherwise reasonable to believe that they have no financial connection with the individual.

Any individual can ask for their credit reference file to be corrected if it contains information about other people with whom they have no financial connection or is otherwise incorrect.

Further information can be obtained from the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

EU Export Subsidies

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the EU export subsidies whose removal would be of benefit to developing countries. [149109]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The export subsidies whose removal would be of benefit will vary according to a developing country's comparative advantage in agricultural production. That is why I would encourage all developing countries to engage with the Commission in discussing which export subsidies should be eliminated as part of this offer.

Export Assistance

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how her Department *(a)* encourages and *(b)* assists UK businesses to export. [153865]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A key role of UK Trade and Investment (formerly British Trade International)—a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department of Trade and Industry—is to present the benefits of internationalising business as well as equipping firms with the information and capabilities to fulfil their export potential. UKTI encourages and assists business by offering a range of services to companies, details of which are contained in its current Departmental Report issued in May 2003 (Cm 5915). UKTI's Departmental Report for 2003–04 will be issued in April 2004. Copies of Departmental Reports are laid in the Libraries of the House.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the top five clients/companies, by value, of the Export Credits Guarantee Department for each of the last five years. [152981]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The information is as follows:

1998–99

BAE Systems Ltd.
Airbus Industrie
Mitsui Babcock Energy Ltd.
RWE Thames Water plc[1]
Skanska Cementation International Ltd.

1999–2000

BAE Systems Ltd.
Airbus Industrie
Alstom Power Plants Ltd.
MBDA UK Ltd.
Dresser Kellogg Energy Services Ltd.

2000–01

BAE Systems Ltd.
Airbus Industrie
ABN AMRO Bank NV[1]
RWE Thames Water plc[1]
Mabey and Johnson Ltd.

2001–02

BAE Systems Ltd.
Airbus Industrie
ABN AMRO Bank NV[1]
RWE Thames Water plc[1]
Mabey and Johnson Ltd.

2002–03

BAE Systems Ltd.
ABN AMRO Bank NV[1]
Airbus Industrie
Westland Helicopters Ltd.
MBDA UK Ltd.

Customers are listed by the value of issue/renewed guarantees.

[1] These represent Overseas Investment Insurance cases (covering either equity investments or loans).

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her Department's assessment of the debt owed to the Export Credits Guarantee Department by other nations; what assessment has been made of how much of these debts can be recovered and from whom; how her Department plans to recover them; and what targets have been set for their recovery. [144833]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 18 December 2003]:* ECGD claims payments resulting from sovereign default are generally recovered through the Paris Club of Official Creditors. Paris Club creditors act in concert to agree appropriate debt restructuring with countries in difficulty.

Through this route, ECGD usually receives between £300 million and £400 million per annum. As at 30 September 2003 there were agreements with 46 countries owing ECGD a total of £10 billion. ECGD expects to recover the majority of this debt together with additional moratorium interest.

It is expected that the unsustainable debt of the heavily indebted poor countries still remaining will be written off over the next few years.

ECGD makes provisions against loss. In preparing statutory resource accounts ECGD estimates the recoverable element of outstanding paid claims based on sound valuation principles and assumption methodologies that conform to best practice as recognised and used by the major financial institutions in assessing similar risks.

For non-Paris Club debt ECGD similarly makes a regular assessment of the likely recoverability of debt where default has occurred. It then sets targets accordingly. ECGD uses a wide range of strategies to recover such debt, in line with best market practice and focuses its resources accordingly.

Faraday Partnerships

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new products and processes have been brought to the market place as a result of each of the Faraday partnerships in each year since 2000. [152039]

Ms Hewitt: The network of 24 Faraday Partnerships were selected for DTI support between 1999 and 2002. The Partnerships are currently engaged in research that will produce the new products and processes of the future. Nonetheless, there is an emerging roster of products and processes already beginning to reach the market.

The products and processes brought to market by each Faraday in 2003 are as shown below. It can take longer in some sectors to advance from concept and research to product or process than in others and those Faradays which have been in operation for longer have generally brought to market more new products and processes than those who have only recently begun work.

Partnerships selected in 1999 (had been receiving EPSRC support since 1997)

Imaging [storage, retrieval, interpretation and secure management of images]

Five products (two from new spin-out companies), including imaging systems to assist doctors in monitoring how babies with reconstructive surgery

(e.g. cleft palate repairs) grow and develop, and services in the creative media (film etc.) industries in generating fully-realistic 3D human images.

INTErSECT [intelligent sensors for control technologies]

Seven products and two services (consulting services) established as a direct result of Intersect support and activities, (of these two are new spin-out company related). These include emissions monitoring devices for motor vehicles, and fibre-optic systems for pressure sensing in the oil industry.

Faraday Packaging Partnership [advanced packaging]

Two entirely new products: most activities involve working with companies and academia to improve existing products rather than the development of completely new ones. The Partnership is moving into the area of Affective Design, linking psychology and design with engineering.

PRIME [products comprising interdependent mechanical and electronic components]

Seven products and four process innovations brought to market in 2003. These have included a miniature thruster for applications in underwater remotely operated vehicles, new process capability for large area flexible circuits in the automotive sector, and an intelligent machine-vision directed laser materials production system for textile machinery.

Partnerships selected in 2000

Advance [advanced materials for the automotive and aerospace sectors]

No specific new products or processes as yet.

Food Processing Faraday

Six working engineering prototypes of improved universally applicable machinery for unit processes in food manufacturing; two of these are now being scaled up with equipment suppliers and food manufacturers.

Impact [applications of colloid technology]

Five new products (smart wound dressing substrate, conducting plastic films, novel lasers, combined AFM/ analysis techniques, novel catalysts for fuel cells) and four new processes (screen printing, tablet production, and two novel routes to nanoparticle production).

One of the new products has resulted in the development of a smart material for use in wound dressings.

The Faraday Partnership for Industrial Mathematics

Three products, including a novel multi-phase milk-flow meter; a new product incorporating a capability to determine absolute position in a plane from local observation and an algorithm to resolve a problem of approximately 10 years standing concerning the solution of polynomial equations.

Faraday Plastics

Seven processes and three products, including the production of fire-resistant polyurethane foam using nano-clay fillers; improved flow in polymer processing using CO_2 in an environmentally friendly manner and a new process for producing specialised oilfield components in advanced engineering polymers.

Technitex [technical textiles]

Eleven new products or processes involving textiles for engineering and medical use.

Partnerships selected in 2001

COMIT [communications and mobile information technology]

Three products using materials invented and tested by the Partnership. four further devices are being tested and sampled.

Crystal [green technology for the chemical and allied industries]

No new products or processes but three near-to-market technologies are in the innovation pipeline as a result of Crystal activity: a demonstrator project for VOC recovery, a new manufacturing process for an inorganic compound and novel catalysts for selective oxidation processes.

EPPIC [electronics and photonics packaging interconnect]

Seven processes (including training in new electronic assembly techniques, advanced soldering, transfer to Pb-free materials).

Five pre-production products including a medical device, a novel electronic device, a novel safety lighting system and a metal nanocrystal coating process.

FIRST [remediation of the polluted environment]

An enhanced on-site soil testing system has been launched enabling rapid risk assessment of contaminated sites.

A range of courses have been implemented to meet the training needs of the environmental consultancy market where raising standards and developing best practice is crucial to contaminated land management.

High-Power Radio Frequency Engineering

Three projects in support of the low carbon economy in minerals extraction, manufacture of transport components and automated bakery equipment and one in the area of recycling to reclaim the wood fibres from waste MDF.

INREB [integration of new and renewable energy in buildings]

INREB currently has 13 products and processes under development. None has yet reached the market, however.

Pro-Bio [biocatalytic manufacturing processes]

No products released to market but several in development including a catalysis web site, an enzyme screening kit and an ionic liquid screening kit.

Smart Optics [optical systems that dynamically adjust]

No products released to market, but 25 projects in hand.

Partnerships selected in 2002

These Partnerships are still in the very early stages of their development:

Genesis [farm animal genomics and genetics]

No products of processes yet: but the Partnership has been instrumental in facilitating UK participation in the international programme to sequence and annotate the bovine genome.

Insight [high through-put technologies]

No products or processes yet but there are several projects in hand (e.g. devices for high through-put corrosion testing) which are expected to reach the market by 2005.

Medical Devices

No products or processes yet, but the Partnership has been instrumental in speeding up the overall process for existing commercialisation plans. Examples include a new device to measure central venous pressure to assist surgeons in critical heart and trauma surgery which is now about six months from market.

Mini-Waste [novel technologies for the minimisation of industrial waste]

No products or processes yet

Pinpoint [global navigation satellite system applications]

No products or processes yet.

PowderMatrix [powder-based manufacturing]

No products or processes yet.

Fisheries

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on recent developments on vessel eligibility for the Compensation Scheme for Former Icelandic Water Trawlermen. [153599]

Nigel Griffiths: On 1 February 2004 I issued a list of twenty-one new vessels for inclusion on the list of Icelandic water vessels. These follow consideration of evidence put forward by trawlermen and their representatives concerning vessels that fished within 200 miles of Iceland but that had not previously been included on the list of valid vessels. There is now an appeal period until 23 February 2004 to submit further evidence on appeal against any vessels that have not accepted onto the list. This will be assessed in the same way as the evidence submitted so far and against the criteria announced in November 2003.

Once the list has been finalised, the Department will re-examine claims from trawlermen who worked on these boats and pay additional compensation to those who qualify for it. This will happen automatically—there is no need for claimants to re-apply.

Gas/Electricity Market

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps Ofgem is taking to ensure that *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity customers are aware of the possibilities of saving money by switching utilities supplier; [153317]

(2) what steps Ofgem is taking to ensure that *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity companies do not charge existing customers more than new customers;. [153318]

(3) what steps Ofgem is taking to ensure that domestic users of electricity benefit as much as commercial and industrial users of electricity from the implementation of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements. [153320]

Mr. Timms: These are matters for the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM). I understand that the Chairman of OFGEM will write to the hon. Member about the matters he has raised.

Grocery Market

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how the *(a)* Office of Fair Trading and *(b)* her Department will assess acquisition strategies in the convenience sector of the grocery market. [154261]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The competition authorities consider each acquisition on a case-by-case basis against the provisions of the Enterprise Act, if it reaches the qualifying thresholds for consideration. The Department of Trade and Industry has no role in this consideration.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of the impact on the consumer of dominance by large chains of the mainstream grocery market; [154262]

(2) what plans she has to increase *(a)* fair competition for retailers and *(b)* choice for consumers in the convenience sector of the grocery market. [154263]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There have been several reports by the Competition Commission over the past few years on the supermarket sector. The Competition Commission's report "Supermarkets: a report on the supply of groceries from multiple stores in the United Kingdom", published on 10 October 2000, found that the market was broadly competitive as far as consumers were concerned.

It is the role of the independent competition authorities to assess the impact of dominance by large chains in the grocery market, and whether or not such dominance may be against the public interest. It is also the responsibility of the competition authorities to ensure that competition rules are not infringed and to investigate any alleged breaches.

Group 3 Employment Cases

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many disputed Group 3 employment cases there are. [149085]

Mr. Sutcliffe: 567 Group 3 claims have entered the disputes procedure to date.

Of these 237 are in informal dispute, 23 are in formal dispute and 307 have now reached conclusion.

Indonesia

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under what circumstances official meetings relating to Indonesia have been attended by the right hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Mandelson); for what purposes; and if she will make a statement. [152696]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 3 February 2004]*: I am told that my right hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool has not attended official meetings relating to Indonesia held by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Information Technology (Women)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what target her Department has set for the number of women working in information and communication technology; and what strategy her Department has to achieve this target. [153583]

Mr. Timms: The Department of Trade and Industry does not have any targets specific to women working in information and communication technology, but is working to increase the participation of women in this

sector, as well s others through the work of a new dedicated Resource Centre for Women in science, engineering and technology (SET). The Resource Centre is part of the Government's Strategy, published in April 2003 as a response to Baroness Greenfield's SET Fair Report. The Government will look to the new Resource Centre to carry out specific tasks in support of its overarching objective to work with employers to improve the position of women in SET: recognition for good SET employers; the sharing of good employment practice; disseminating and sharing information; setting up and maintaining an expert women's database; maintaining and disseminating statistics; raising the profile of women in SET; pump-priming innovation through developing, with others, support for initiatives such as mentoring, networking, speaker's bursaries and mobility issues; supporting returners; and coordinating the work of women in science organisations. It will draw on the experience of women and women in science organisations to do this and co-ordinate their activity to achieve critical mass.

The JIVE Consortium has been chosen to run the resource centre. This is a consortium of Sheffield Hallam University, Bradford College, the Open University and Cambridge University through its WiSETI (Women in Science, Engineering and Technology) Project. Between them they have extensive knowledge of, and standing in, all the sectors of SET (including ITEC) and the built environment. The Government is providing funding of £800,000 per annum to cover all the activities of the centre. Additional funding of £500,000 is available to the resource centre for a returners' scheme, to gather feedback on existing schemes as soon as it can, and develop a strategic plan for the future investment of these additional funds. DfES will also contribute £200,000 to the Resource Centre for schemes aimed at undergraduates. The Consortium members proposed to deliver a Resource Centre that represents all sectors in which there are high levels of occupational segregation for women in science, engineering, technology, and the built environment and intend to be relevant to all women whether working at professional, technician or craft level.

It will be important for the centre to work in partnership with professional SET bodies and others in the SET community, with organisations such as the CBI, the TUC, large and small employers, and the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). The new centre will be expected to raise funds from other sources both private and public. It is expected that organisations that want partnership with an support from the resource centre will contribute resources, both to specific projects and to allow the centre to operate more widely, to maximise the leverage of the initial public finding to the centre.

To increase the number of women who can maintain their SET carers and are able to return after a career break, as well as achieve their potential through promotion and engagement in policy making circles, they need access to opportunities for self- development, and to meet people who can introduce them to these opportunities. Mentoring is acknowledged as a key tool in personal development and empowerment. The Promotion SET for Women Unit is funding a pilot three-year national mentoring scheme for women in SET. The Project is being delivered through two organisations—the Women's Engineering Society and the Association of Women in Science and Engineering. Four blue chip companies including Astra Zeneca, BAE Systems, Demag Delaval Industrial Turbomachinery Ltd. and Ford are also supporting the project. The pilot mentoring scheme will use industrial mentoring training programmes in order to train mentors and prepare mentees. They project is well under way and over 60 mentors and mentees have been matched, and mentoring has commenced.

Milk Marque

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of the Competition Report into the operation of the former dairy producer co-operative Milk Marque; [153484]

(2) what recent assessment she has made of the progress of farmer co-operatives created following the break up of Milk Marque. [153485]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Following publication of the Monopoly and Mergers Commission report "Milk: a report on the supply in Great Britain of raw cows milk" in July 1999, the Milk Marque co-operative voluntarily split into three independent enterprises—Axis, Zenith and Milk Link. All three are still operating, although Axis and Zenith subsequently merged with other enterprises and now trade as Dairy Farmers of Britain and First Milk respectively.

Miners' Compensation

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1174W, on miners' compensation, for what reason the initial discussions about a direct agreement with the National Union of Mineworkers were not pursued. [154476]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* In May 1998 my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) invited the NUM to contribute to the Claims Handling Arrangements through their solicitors, Raleys. Raleys, although not one of the firms chosen to negotiate directly with the Department, were members of the Claimants' Solicitors Group represented by these firms. Raleys were kept informed and asked to contribute to the negotiations on numerous occasions throughout the process.

The NUM declined this opportunity and Mr. Scargill made it clear in a letter of 20 May 1999 that he would

"not be bound by any agreement reached by any Steering Committee or grouping of solicitors".

The NUM have subsequently declined the offer of further meetings.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average payment in compensation received was in cases fully settled under the chest disease compensation scheme by claimants *(a)* who have had their claims processed by the Union of Democratic Mineworkers Nottingham section subsidiary company Vendside and *(b)* who have had their claims processed by all other solicitors in England. [148311]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 15 January 2004]:* The average full and final payment received by claimants through the UDM is £5,213 and the average full and final payment received by claimants through all other solicitors in England is £6,810.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will announce the minimum payment under the Miners' Compensation Fund; and if she will make a statement. [154266]

Nigel Griffiths: At the court hearing on 3 February 2004 the judge made it clear that if offers were in line with the Agreement, following the High Court judgment, then the issue of low-value offers was for the solicitors to consider further, not the DTI.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she last used a train in connection with her ministerial duties. [155163]

Ms Hewitt: 6 February 2004.

Money Laundering

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will take steps to tackle the misuse of UK-based companies to facilitate money laundering and illegal asset transfer from other countries; and if she will make a statement. [154452]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The UK has a comprehensive set of defences against money laundering which make us one of the least attractive countries in the world for money launderers to operate. The system has been strengthened considerably in recent months, with new primary and secondary legislation and a major programme to strengthen the systems for industry to report on possible money laundering.

The DTI works closely with the Treasury and Home Office over devising a legislative framework that deters and detects money laundering. I have powers to appoint company inspectors and to require information from companies under the Companies Acts. My Department is aware of its responsibility to report any evidence of possible money laundering to the National Criminal Intelligence Service and when we uncover such transactions we do so. We have close working relationships with other UK regulators and law enforcement agencies. We have powers to assist overseas regulators and can seek their help if we need it.

National Minimum Wage

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 781W, on wage levels, how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful prosecutions have been brought against employers found not to be complying with the national minimum wage in each year since the introduction of the national minimum wage. [154008]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Inland Revenue has a range of enforcement tools at its disposal but successfully resolves the great majority of cases through conciliation without enforcement action being needed. As a result, to date there have been no criminal prosecutions in relation the underpayment of the minimum wage.

Offshore Oil and Gas Facilities

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what percentage of man hours involved in the construction of offshore oil and gas facilities destined for UK waters are required by her Department to be based in the UK; [154267]

(2) what regulatory regime governs the UK labour content of the construction of facilities for the oil and gas industries based on the UK continental shelf. [154268]

Mr. Timms: DTI's Energy Group does not stipulate the involvement of UK nationals, or UK companies, when awarding licences under the Petroleum Act.

Procurement in relation to hydrocarbon exploration and production is a matter solely for the field operator whose actions are governed by The Utilities Contracts Regulations 1996 which require competitive tendering processes.

Government support the principle of competitive tendering within Europe—as its use is essential if the cost of development on the UK's maturing continental shelf is to be reduced.

DTI works with the industry supply chain in this sector, to improve competitiveness, particularly of UK-based fabricators. These companies, where they have the capability, have won, in open market competition, around two thirds of the value of the contracts on recent UKCS developments.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has made to the European Commission concerning fair competition in the supply of installations for the gas and oil industry on the UK continental shelf. [154271]

Mr. Timms: DTI has, in recent times, made no interventions with, or representations to, the European Commission concerning fair competition in the supply of installations for the gas and oil industry on the UKCS. However I would be very concerned should there be any anti-competitive behaviour in this sector. If officials are supplied with clear evidence of anti-competitive practise, such as illegal subsidies or abuse of a dominant market position, the matter will be taken to the commission urgently. The commission would need clear evidence of such practices to take action.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the principal conditions attached to the licence issued by her Department to EnCana to develop the Buzzard field in the North Sea were. [154273]

Mr. Timms: The Buzzard field extends into acreage covered by two Petroleum Act Licences: P928, awarded in 1995, and P986, awarded in 1998. Both of these licences were issued on the terms and conditions that were standard for Seaward Production Licences at the time: for instance, a six-year initial term, to be followed by a 12-year second term and an 18-year final term. Neither was issued to EnCana in the first instance.

The principal conditions of P928 are based, subject to minor amendments, on the Model Clauses set out in Schedule 4 to the Petroleum (Production) (Seaward Areas) Regulations 1988 (S.I. 1988 no. 1213), as amended by the Petroleum (Production) (Seaward Areas) (Amendment) Regulations 1990 (S.I. 1990 no. 1332) and the Petroleum (Production) (Seaward Areas) (Amendment) Regulations 1992 (S.I. 1992 no. 2378).

The principal conditions of P986 are based, subject to minor amendments, on the Model Clauses set out in Schedule 4 to the Petroleum (Production) (Seaward Areas) Regulations 1988 (S.I. 1988 no. 1213), as amended by Offshore Safety Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Production) (Seaward Areas) (Amendment) Regulations 1995 (S.I. 1995 no. 1435) and the Petroleum (Production) (Seaward Areas) (Amendment) Regulations 1996 (S.I. 1996 no. 2946), except for the amendments made by Regulations 8(a) (ii) and 8(c) to 8(h).

Both licences were additionally subject to a series of conditions specific to the particular acreage. These appeared under the headings: "Environmental Seismic/ Drilling", "Oil-spills", "Defence and National Security Matters" and "Fisheries, Shipping and other Interests" in the case of P928; and "General", "Environmental/ Seismic and Drilling", "Oil spills", and "Fisheries and other interests" in the case of P986.

The Buzzard field development was granted consent in 2003, subject to standard conditions that are common to such consents.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements are in place to enforce European Union health and safety at work standards at each stage of the construction and installation process in projects for Britain's offshore oil and gas industries; and what the relationship is between health and safety legislation and her Department's licensing regime. [154284]

Mr. Timms: European Union health and safety at work standards, as set out in EU Directives, are implemented in Great Britain and in respect of the UK offshore oil and gas industries through the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and subordinate health and safety regulations. This legislation is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive. The legislation is entirely separate from DTI's licensing regime under the Petroleum Act.

Operating and Financial Review

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she intends to publish the draft regulations for the forthcoming Operating and Financial Review; and what technical improvements have been recommended to her Department for the Review. [154270]

Ms Hewitt: The Government intends to publish draft regulations on the Operating and Financial Review (OFR) for consultation as soon as possible. These will take account of over 250 responses dealing with the OFR to the White Paper, "Modernising Company Law", published in July 2002, as well as of European legislation and of further analysis.

Phoenix Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications for Phoenix funds have been *(a)* submitted and *(b)* accepted for each nation in the UK since its inception; and if she will make a statement. [153535]

Nigel Griffiths: Information for the Phoenix Fund is as follows:

Country	*Applications received*	*Applications accepted*
England	945	236
Northern Ireland	1	1
Scotland	1	1
Wales	0	0

The Government have allocated resources to promote enterprise in disadvantaged areas and under-represented groups. In England, that allocation has been designated as the Phoenix Fund. The devolved Administrations, who have responsibility for business support in their own countries, have made separate arrangements for using their allocations. However, for reasons of economy of scale and to ensure consistency with other existing provision, a limited number of elements of the Phoenix Fund provision to support Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) apply across the whole of the UK.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will assess the *(a)* uptake and *(b)* effectiveness of the Phoenix Fund in disadvantaged communities. [153545]

Nigel Griffiths: The uptake of the Phoenix Fund has been encouraging. The Phoenix Development Fund is supporting over 90 projects testing out innovative approaches in providing business support for disadvantaged communities and under-represented groups. Up until the end of September 2003, the latest date for which figures are available, these projects had helped in the creation of some 7,700 new enterprises and assisted over 7,100 existing businesses.

Among other projects being funded is the work of 55 Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) that provide finance to businesses unable to obtain it from other sources. Up until the end of December 2003, those CDFIs have made over 1,050 loans to the value of over £6.5 million that have resulted in the creation of some 1,860 jobs in over 1,000 new and existing businesses.

The effectiveness of the Fund is currently being evaluated. An interim report of an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the Phoenix Development Fund is due to be published shortly. A final report will be published in the second half of 2004. An independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the first two rounds of support for CDFIs is currently underway and will report in April.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* current and *(b)* projected budget for 2004–05 is of the Phoenix Fund; and if she will make a statement. [153546]

Nigel Griffiths: In 1999 the Phoenix Fund was established with a budget of £30 million through to 2002–03 to promote enterprise in disadvantaged areas and under-represented groups. A further £70 million was allocated to the Fund in the 2000 Spending Round for 2001–02 to 2003–04. As a result of the 2002 Comprehensive Spending Review £50 million was allocated to the Fund for 2004–05—2005–06.

The budget for the Fund in 2003–04 is £30 million and £25 million in 2004–05.

Phonographic Industry

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what evidence she has collated on the purchase of compact discs at discount prices on the internet and subsequent surcharges imposed by the British Phonographic Industry. [153146]

Ms Hewitt: I do not have information on the specific facts behind the dispute between BPI and CD WOW! However, I understand that CD WOW! have agreed not to import products from outside the European Economic Area to satisfy customers in the UK. I do not believe there is an issue of surcharges involved.

Regional Venture Capital Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of whether investment activity rates will achieve their investment targets for the regional venture capital fund. [153578]

Nigel Griffiths: At 31 January 2004, eight funds have invested £21 million in 86 SMEs.

The Funds were launched to stimulate more finance for small businesses and address market weaknesses in the provision of finance.

I am advised that, even at this early stage, the proposed investment targets will be met.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to introduce a standardised definition across each region of an application to a regional venture capital fund. [153579]

Nigel Griffiths: The Government encourages the fund managers of these commercial funds, managed by experienced venture capital specialists, to share best practice in areas like the quality of applications.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how her Department is *(a)* monitoring and *(b)* evaluating the performance of regional venture capital funds. [153580]

Nigel Griffiths: The Limited Partnership Agreement (LPA) requires the RVCF Fund Manager to establish and report progress of the fund to an Advisory Committee on a regular meeting cycle. Both the DTI and the local Regional Development Agency have a seat on the Advisory Committee for each RVCF. The LPA also requires the fund manager to supply regular reports to investors.

The report of an Early Assessment of the RVCF Programme can be found on the website www.businesslink.gov.uk/regional-venture-capital-fiind.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when her Department will publish measurements of the impact of regional venture capital funds on the wider economy. [153581]

Nigel Griffiths: The first two of these 10-year funds were established in January 2002 and the last one in July 2003 .

It is too early to make an assessment of their impact.

Small Businesses

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what feedback she has received from small companies in relation to the impact of the higher marginal rate on profits in the band £10,000 to £50,000 since its introduction; and what her assessment is of the impact. [153557]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The introduction of lower rates of corporation tax has reduced the corporation tax liability of small companies, and has been welcomed by business. The introduction of the starting rate of corporation tax in April 2000, now at 0 per cent., and the reduction in the small companies' rate in April 2002 to 19 per cent. will together have reduced the CT liability of companies who make profits of between £10,000 and £50,000 by £2,000 at the lower end of this range to £500 at the higher end.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the *(a)* total and *(b)* yearly small business service budget was devoted to deregulatory initiatives in each year since its inception. [154189]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* The information is as follows:

	Administration costs (£000)	*Percentage of total*
2000–01	725	10
2001–02	1,061	10.8
2002–03	1,505	12.7
2003–04	1,530	12.5

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies have benefited from the Small Business Loan Scheme in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley in each of the last three years. [153843]

Nigel Griffiths: The following table shows the number of companies that have benefited from the Small Firms Loan Guarantee in the North West, Lancashire and Chorley in the last three years.

Financial year	*North West*	*Lancashire*	*Chorley*
2000–01	371	141	3
2001–02	451	142	4
2002–03	417	122	6
2003–04[1]	512	156	7

[1] Ten months to 31 January 2004

SMART Awards

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the role of the SMART awards in boosting enterprise in the UK. [153549]

Nigel Griffiths: In 2001–02 the SMART scheme helped 1,140 small firms with grants or grant offers of £47 million. This is a record take-up and a substantial increase on the 800+ awards in 2000–02. It is estimated that the impact of SMART has boosted the economy by an extra £500 million pa and generated an extra £270 million in exports.

The new Grant for Research and Development builds on the success of the SMART scheme.

UK Online for Business

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many firms were given assistance with internet business solutions by UK online for business, in each year since its inception. [152049]

Mr. Timms: Since inception, UK online for business has helped several hundred thousand businesses, with over 250,000 interactions with businesses each year. UK online for business offers a wide range of impartial jargon-free information through our adviser network, publications, interactive business tools, a programme of events a comprehensive website and a national network of business advisers who deliver frontline advice to SMEs.

UK Online for business has over 450 partners, which comprise of key partners and a combination of small companies, intermediaries (TAs, professional bodies etc.), local authorities and other Government Departments. We provide a package of support for our advisers/partners who run events. In the financial year 2002–03, 779 events were supported with an estimated SME audience of 161,307. So far this financial year 2003–04 we have supported 528 events with an estimated SME audience of 77,000.

We have over 120 publications some of which are interactive covering a range of business and technical topics. In January 2002, UK online for business launched the existing website, where registered users have increased from 6,876 in April 2002 to over 30,000 in January 2004. In the last year financial year UK online for business call centres dealt with 15,000 calls, 13,500 emails and distributed 1.6 million items of collateral.

Wind Turbines

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what standards regulate aerodynamically generated wind noise in residential areas; and if she will make a statement. [154380]

Mr. Timms: Currently planning authorities take into account the recommendations and methodologies for the measurement of noise in the case of wind farms as set out in the report 'ETSU-R-97: The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms'.

The report is available on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/renewables/publications/noiseassessment.shtml.

World Trade Organisation

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with her counterparts in the United States since the breakdown of the World Trade Organisation ministerial conference in Cancun about the likely impact of the United States Farm Bill on the *(a)* economies of, and *(b)* living standards in, developing countries. [149115]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government conducted intensive discussion with the United States officials and Ministers when the US Farm Bill was first introduced in 2002. Since Cancun there has been on-going contact between UK and US officials about all aspects of the WTO Round, including on the question of US domestic subsidies and their potential impact on the livelihoods of producers in developing countries.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will identify the ways in which representatives of developing countries at the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference at Cancun judged that the transparency of the negotiating process was better than at Seattle and Doha. [149124]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Wider consultations by the Chairman of the General Council in the months leading up to Cancun, daily meetings for all Heads of Delegation and an open structure for the discussion sessions at the ministerial conference in Cancun itself gave considerable opportunity to make views clear. We need to maintain the benefits from these changes of process at future WTO ministerials.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many and what type of armoured patrol vehicles are available to British troops in Afghanistan. [153053]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* There are currently 10 Saxon light armoured personnel carriers deployed with British Forces in Kabul.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future plans for an expanded NATO peacekeeping mission in Northern Afghanistan; and what the British involvement will be. [154757]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom strongly supports the further expansion beyond Kabul of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under NATO, and will play its full part in helping the Alliance to make that goal a reality. In particular, and subject to the agreement of our partners in NATO and the ISAF, we are ready to build upon the success of our Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar-e-Sharif and play a leading role in expanding the ISAF in Northern Afghanistan. Final decisions on the nature of our future

military commitment to the ISAF will depend on the outcome of NATO operational planning, and agreement with our partners in the ISAF.

Aircraft Carriers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which aircraft carriers he plans to have available for service in 2014. [154668]

Mr. Ingram: On current plans, the first of the larger and more capable CVF class of aircraft carriers will be in service in 2014.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if it remains his policy that the Invincible Class carriers shall remain in service until replaced by the new aircraft carriers. [154669]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy Invincible Class carriers (CVS) will be replaced as part of a phased replacement programme by the larger and more capable carriers (CVF) in the first half of the next decade.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reason the decommissioning date of HMS Ark Royal has been brought forward to 2013. [154667]

Mr. Ingram: The decommissioning date for HMS Ark Royal has not been brought forward. On current plans it remains towards the end of 2013.

Apache Helicopters

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Apache helicopters are in use at RAF Shawbury; [153969]

(2) how many Apache helicopters are in storage at RAF Shawbury; and what their value is; [153970]

(3) for how long Apache helicopters have been in storage at RAF Shawbury; [153971]

(4) whether the Apache helicopters at RAF Shawbury have been paid for. [153972]

Mr. Ingram: Storage of Apache Mkl aircraft at RAF Shawbury commenced in June 2002. There are now 25 aircraft at RAF Shawbury with a value of £27 million each that have been accepted and paid for. Each Apache in storage is fully maintained and supported but is not used operationally or for training purposes from RAF Shawbury.

Army Training

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what minimum training requirements are in place for the *(a)* Regular Army and *(b)* Territorial Army prior to deployment on operations. [154023]

Mr. Ingram: As a minimum, Regular personnel are to have completed their mandatory Individual Training Directives (Army) and the Pre-Deployment Training package delivered by the Operational Training and Advisory Group.

As a minimum, Territorial Army personnel have to be designated 'Fit For Role' and attend the Reinforcement Holding Unit for an eight day period of intensive revision of their Individual Training Directives (Army) prior to deployment. They also receive the same mandatory theatre-specific Pre-Deployment Training provided to Regular personnel.

Challenger II Tanks

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Challenger II tanks are currently operational. [152606]

Mr. Ingram: As at January 2004, 58 per cent. of our Challenger II Main Battle Tanks available for operations were classed as 'Fit'. Equipment is deemed to be 'Fit' if it meets the inspection criteria stated in the relevant Army Equipment Support Publication Inspections Standards for all operational and peacetime legal and safety requirements. Many of the tanks classified as not 'Fit' require only minor work in terms of spares or labour to rectify the problem, and many of these would be able to undertake their prescribed role in an operational environment.

Civil Contingency Reaction Force

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the reservists who make up the operational capability of Civil Contingency Reaction Forces are on active duty overseas; and if he will make a statement. [154672]

Mr. Ingram: Currently, 852 members of the Civil Contingency Reaction Forces (CCRFs) are mobilised overseas, or on active service in the UK.

This will not affect the operational capability of the CCRFs.

Consultation Documents

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the individuals and organisations to whom *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its executive agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultation document, The Armed Forces Pensions Scheme Review. [153850]

Mr. Caplin: The consultation documents on the new pension and compensation schemes were issued in March 2001 by the Ministry of Defence. We are not aware of any copies distributed by the Department's executive agencies or non-departmental public bodies. Copies were sent to the Commanding Officers of every Unit, with a summary leaflet for distribution to all serving personnel. The documents were also placed on the MOD's intranet and Internet sites. In addition, copies were sent to other interested Government Departments, the principal ex-Service organisations, the Defence Select Committee, the Armed Forces Pay Review Body, the Pension Appeal Tribunals and other interested bodies. The Consultation Reports published on each scheme are on the MOD website and provide a full list of those who responded.

Defence Exports (UK Employment)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment his Department has made of the

York University study estimating the impact on UK employment of the Government's promotion of export sales of defence equipment; [153764]

(2) what estimate he has made of the increase in UK employment attributable to the Government's promotion of export sales of defence equipment. [153765]

Mr. Ingram: In an assessment undertaken in December 2001, the Department welcomed the York University report on the costs and benefits of defence exports, and endorsed its broad conclusions, while expressing reservations about some of the assumptions made.

Estimates of UK employment dependent on defence exports are published annually in the UK Defence Statistics and on-line at: www.dasa.mod.uk. The Defence Export Services Organisation fulfils a fundamental role in implementing the Government's policy of supporting legitimate UK defence exports. In 2002, the UK defence industry signed export sales orders worth just over £5 billion and successive customer Satisfaction Surveys of the UK defence industry have revealed that over 75 per cent. of this business would not have been achieved without the assistance of DESO.

Defence Medical Services

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the future accommodation of nursing staff accommodated at *(a)* Keogh Barracks, Aldershot and *(b)* Fort Blockhouse, Gosport. [153886]

Mr. Caplin: There are no nursing staff at Keogh barracks.

Nursing staff accommodated at Fort Blockhouse comprise two groups—Nursing staff employed in the Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit (MDHU) Portsmouth and student military nurses studying at the University of Portsmouth.

On MOD's withdrawal from the management of the Royal Hospital Haslar by 31 March 2007, future options for the accommodation of MDHU nursing staff will be developed in line with progress on the construction of the new Queen Alexandra's Hospital, Cosham.

Military nurse education has been transferred progressively from Portsmouth to Birmingham since September 2001. The MOD is considering a number of options for the future provision of Service accommodation at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine.

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* current strength is of each medical specialty in the Defence Medical Services. [153883]

Mr. Caplin: As at 1 October 2003, the latest period for which figures are available, the Defence Medical Services had a trained strength of 414 doctors, against an establishment of 655. These figures, broken down by specialty, are as follows:

Specialty	*Establishment*	*Trained strength*
Secondary care consultants		
Anaesthetics	55	33
General Physicians	26	22
Dermatology	3	3
Paediatrics	2	2
Genito Urinary Medicine	2	1
General Surgery	35	23
Urology	4	3
Orthopaedic Surgery	25	17
Burns and Plastics	5	4
Accident and Emergency	11	5
Psychiatry	23	11
Ophthalmic Surgery	3	3
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	11	7
ORL	5	3
Rheumatology and Rehabilitation	7	6
Radiology	11	8
Pathology	9	0
Haematology	1	2
Histopatholoy	0	4
Microbiology	2	3
Aviation Medicine	6	1
Sub Total (a)	246	161
Primary care consultants and GPs		
GD (Occupational Medicine	25	29
Diving	4	2
Radiation	5	5
Aviation (Royal Navy and Army)	6	12
GD (Public Health)	5	8
General Practice	364	197
Sub Total (b)	409	253
Total (a + b)	655	414

Note:
The establishment is the list of funded clinical posts/appointments as of October 2003.
The trained strength represents the number of Consultants and GMPs in each specialty as at 1 October 2003.

In addition to the clinical posts, there are an additional 104 command and staff posts that are currently required to be filled by clinical personnel from the trained strength.

Foreign Aircraft

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 245W, where information on the foreign aircraft hired by his Department is held; on what basis the decision was reached that information on the use of foreign aircraft could be provided only at disproportionate cost; who took this decision; and whether the Department has previously provided information on hire of foreign aircraft. [154260]

Mr. Ingram: Information relating to the charter of the majority of aircraft for the Ministry of Defence is held by the Defence Transport and Movements Agency (DTMA). As the Department operates disaggregated budgets, it is possible that other parts of the Ministry of Defence could have chartered aircraft over the last five years and in that event, such information is not held centrally. The Department has no requirement to record specifically information relating to makes, types and origins of aircraft chartered. The Department competes its charter business in accordance with European rules and often through a broker in order to achieve value for money. Safety is of paramount importance and the nationality of the aircraft is but one consideration in the assessment of suitability for task.

The decision that information on foreign aircraft chartered could be provided only at disproportionate cost was made by the Chief Executive of the DTMA. It was based on a calculation that the exercise would entail one member of DTMA being removed from normal duties to work only on this task for a minimum of five working days. This period would exceed the cost threshold of £600 and have a detrimental effect on the daily work of air movements. DTMA would also have to contact all other parts of the Department. and re-engage with brokers, in order to identify all foreign charters. This would be at additional cost.

Some information on chartered aircraft has previously been provided in answers to Questions from hon. Members. where such information was available centrally and did not involve disproportionate cost to recover it.

Information Technology

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list each information technology project being undertaken by his Department and its agencies including the *(a)* start date, *(b)* planned completion date, *(c)* current expected completion date, *(d)* planned cost and *(e)* current estimated cost; and if he will make a statement. [154671]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Iraq

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British service personnel *(a)* have committed suicide in Iraq or since returning to the UK from Iraq and *(b)* have been returned to the UK from Iraq early because of mental stress. [153691]

Mr. Caplin: During the period 10 January 2003 to 20 December 2003 no member of British service personnel committed suicide in Iraq. Among Service personnel who have since returned to the United Kingdom from Iraq one has died and an open verdict has been recorded by a coroner. In addition six cases have been referred to a coroner for inquest and have not yet been heard.

As of 30 November 2003, the last date for which these data are currently available, 119 personnel had been medically evacuated from Iraq and received treatment for mental health conditions at the Duchess of Kent Psychiatric Hospital.

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the training received by Trooper Sarah Masters prior to deployment in Iraq. [154022]

Mr. Ingram: Trooper Sarah Masters was fully qualified and trained to meet "Call Out" criteria for mobilisation as a member of the Territorial Army.

She was mobilised through the Reserve Training and Mobilisation Centre in early February 2003, before transferring to the Reinforcement Holding Unit, where she completed pre-deployment refresher training on her individual military skills and received the mandatory Theatre specific Pre-Deployment Training package.

Trooper Masters, and her colleagues from the Royal Yeomanry, then spent a three week period undertaking collective training at Salisbury Plain Training Area and Chelsea Barracks, London, before deploying to Iraq, where they undertook a further 10 days of collective training alongside their Regular colleagues.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the outcome was of the investigation into the deaths of the six Royal Military Police soldiers killed in Iraq on 24 June 2003; what documents relating to the case have so far been made public; whether he plans to make public the relevant communications log; and if he will make a statement. [154451]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 6 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 770. The SIB investigation is still ongoing and we cannot put a timeframe on how long the investigation might take. Once it has been completed a full report will be given to the families concerned. I will make public as many of its findings as possible, subject to operational and other security constraints. We are providing as much information to the families as we are able, consistent with the need to maintain the integrity of the investigation.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK representatives there are on the Iraq Survey Group; how many there have been in total since the Group was established; what the cost to date has been of UK representation; and what estimate he has made of the total cost of UK participation in the Group. [154455]

Mr. Hoon: There are currently 55 United Kingdom representatives on the Iraq Survey Group. There have been a total of 140 UK representatives who have served in the Iraq Survey Group, 94 Service personnel and 46 civilians. The maximum number at any one time was 76 in October 2003.

The Ministry of Defence identifies the costs of Operations in terms of the net additional costs it has incurred. The costs that the Department would have incurred regardless of the operation taking place, such as wages and salaries, are not included. Savings on activities that have not occurred because of the operation—training exercises for example—are taken into account in arriving at the net figures.

The net additional costs incurred by UK personnel attached to the Iraq Survey Group cannot be differentiated from the total net additional cost of UK personnel deployed to the Gulf region.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average planned tour of duty is for troops serving in Iraq. [154677]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 18 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 755W, to the hon. Member for Truro and St. Austell (Matthew Taylor).

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what additional nuclear biological and chemical warfare training soldiers received in the immediate build-up to Operation Telic. [154756]

Mr. Ingram: All soldiers deploying on Operation Telic were, and remain, mandated to have completed individual training that prepares them for surviving and fighting in a nuclear, biological or chemical environment. They also received a familiarisation briefing immediately prior to deployment on Collective Protection, which focused on how to operate within such an environment.

In addition, Unit Commanders attended a Nuclear Biological and Chemical Defence Cadre, focussing on the threat and possible countermeasures, the lessons of which were then cascaded down to their soldiers.

Building on this foundation of individual training, units reinforced this preparation both before and during deployment.

Mrs. Liddell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make an assessment of the co-operation between UK forces in Iraq and the Civil Defence forces. [143741]

Mr. Ingram: United Kingdom forces are training and mentoring the Iraqi civil defence forces including the Iraq Civil Defence Corps and the Police. To date, in the Multinational Division (South-east) area of responsibility almost all of the ICDC's personnel and approaching half of the police have been trained. In addition 20 Armoured Brigade and the Royal Military Police each have embedded personnel in the respective Iraqi organisations as part of the mentoring process.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 887W, on the Iraq Survey Group, how many personnel were employed in the Iraq Survey Group in June 2003, broken down by *(a)* nationality and *(b)* speciality; and what the projected figures are for the end of 2004. [154239]

Mr. Hoon: The formation of the Iraq Survey Group was announced on 14 April 2003, and there was a period of transition while elements were being moved into place. We do not hold figures for the transition period that can be broken down by nationality or speciality, but we estimate that there were approximately 450 personnel in the Iraq Survey Group in early June. The United Kingdom contribution would have been Headquarters Staff, interviewers/interpreters and scientific and technical specialists. The current planning assumption is that Iraq Survey Group numbers will remain broadly in line with current numbers for as long as is necessary to complete the Group's task.

Israeli Defence Minister (UK Visit)

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what plans he has to discuss the supply of military and security equipment between Israel and the UK with the Israeli Defence Minister during his forthcoming visit to the UK; and if he will make a statement; [153692]

(2) what issues he plans to discuss with the Israeli Defence Minister during his forthcoming visit to the UK; [153693]

(3) if he will make a written statement to the House following the forthcoming visit of the Israeli Defence Minister concerning the issues he discussed with him and the outcome of those discussions. [153694]

Mr. Hoon: I expect to cover a range of issues of interest with Mr. Mofaz including bilateral relations, Middle East Peace Process and other regional issues of common concern.

Joint Strike Fighter

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many joint strike fighters will be ordered; and what the percentage work share of BAE Systems is. [154683]

Mr. Ingram: While no final decisions have been taken, our current planning assumption is that we will buy up to 150 Short Take Off and Vertical Landing variants of the Joint Strike Fighter to meet our Future Joint Combat Aircraft requirements.

There is no formal workshare arrangement in the Joint Strike Fighter programme. All work being undertaken by United Kingdom companies, including BAE Systems, has been won in open competition.

Offshore Patrol Ships

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of whether there is a need to increase the number of offshore patrol ships. [154281]

Mr. Ingram: The number of Royal Navy Offshore Patrol Vessels is driven by the operational requirement. As with all aspects of our defence capability they are regularly examined to ensure that they meet the requirement in the most effective way. On current plans the present force level will be maintained.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Private Finance Initiative projects let by his Department since 1997; how long each process took; and who the contractors were. [154754]

Mr. Ingram: The Private Finance Initiative projects that have been let since 1997 are listed as follows. The table indicates the successful consortium/contractor and identifies the length of the process from project initiation to contract award.

The project initiation date is not known for the RAF Fylingdales Power Station project.

Project	*Contractor*	*Duration—years*
Hazardous Stores Information System	ICL	1.09
Defence Fixed Telecommunications System	INCA	15.51
Electronic Messaging Service	Bull Information Services	1.25
Medium Support Helicopter Aircrew Training Facility	CAE	2.42
Hawk Synthetic Training Facility	Reflectone (UK) Ltd.	1.95
Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency	EDS	1.76
Joint Services Command and Staff College	Laing-Serco	3.92

Project	Contractor	Duration—years
RAF Family Quarters Lossiemouth	Covesea	1.50
Attack Helicopter Training Service	Aviation Training International Ltd.	2.33
Family Quarters Yeovilton	Western Challenge Housing Association	1.50
RAF Lyneham Sewage Treatment	Wessex Water	0.44
Tidworth Water and Sewerage	Thames Water plc	2.67
RAF Mail	Racal Telecom (now Global Crossing)	1.42
RAF Fylingdales Power Station	Turner FM	n/k
RAF Cosford/RAF Shawbury Family Quarters	Riverside Housing Association	0.71
Fire Fighting Training Units	Flagship	3.79
Light Aircraft Flying Training	Bombadier Services (UK) Ltd.	1.93
Defence Intelligence Information System	ICL	4.58
Tornado GR4 Synthetic Training Service	Thomson	1.68
Army Foundation College	Defence Services Training Ltd.	2.66
Main Building Refurbishment	Amey/Kvaerner	2.57
Tri-service Materials Handling Equipment	Barloworld	1.22
Naval Communications Service	Alert Communications Ltd.	1.67
E3D Sentry Simulator	Quadrant	1.68
Lynx 7/9 Training Simulator	Thomson	1.70
Defence Animal Centre	Realm	4.22
Central Scotland Family Quarters	Mowlem	1.38
Tri-Service White fleet	Lex Defence Management (LDM)	2.03
Commercial Satellite Communications Service	Nera Satellite Services Ltd.	1.72
Wattisham Service Family Accommodation	Roselead	1.31
Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency	EDS	5.18
ASTUTE Class Training Service	FAST Training Services	2.25
DHE IT System	Bull Information Services	2.84
Bristol, Bath, Portsmouth SFA	TRICOMM	4.42
Heavy Equipment Transporters	FASTTRAX	4.83
Marine support to range and aircrew training	SMIT International (Scotland) Ltd.)	2.17
Materials Handling Equipment Follow-On	Barloworld	1.55
Roll on-Roll off Strategic Sealift	AWSR Shipping Ltd.	5.67
Field Electrical Power Supply	Vickers Specialist Engines	5.69
MOD-wide Water and Wastewater—Package A	Brey Utilities	3.25
Defence Sixth Form College	Minerva	1.81
Records Storage and Management	ProLogis/TNT	5.25
Skynet 5	Paradigm	5.59
Defence High Frequency Communications Service	VT Merlin Communications Ltd.	3.04
Colchester Garrison	RMPA	6.08

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Private Finance Initiative projects that are in the competition stage; and when each competition was opened. [154755]

Mr. Ingram: The Private Finance Initiative projects that are in the competitive stage and the dates that competition was opened are listed as follows. The Invitation To Negotiate issue date has been used as the date when competition started, as this is the date that competition effectively commenced.

Project	Competition start date
Armoured Vehicle Training Service	28 February 2001
Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft	21 December 2000
Northwood HQ PPP Project	18 February 2003
Devonport Support Services	22 June 2001
Portsmouth 2—Housing	29 April 2003
Project ALLENBY/CONNAUGHT	31 July 2002
Royal School of Military Engineers	07 July 2000
MOD-wide Water and Wastewater (Project Aquatrine)—Package C	31 July 2002
MOD-wide Water and Wastewater (Project Aquatrine)—Package B	10 July 2002
C Vehicles	23 March 2001
Tri-service Airfield Support Services	20 September 2001

Recruitment

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* a recruitment freeze is in operation in the Scottish regiments and *(b)* there was a recruitment freeze in operation in the Scottish regiments in 2003. [154483]

Mr. Caplin: The information is as follows:

(a) No.

(b) No.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with Scottish army regiments on recruitment. [154484]

Mr. Caplin: None.

Reserve Forces

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 505W, on reservists, how many reservists were called out immediately following demobilisation in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; and if he will make a statement. [153281]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* Of the 9,550 reservists mobilised in 2003, some 90 were called-out again shortly after being demobilised. To date, none have been in 2004.

Royal College of Defence Medicine

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what accommodation for personnel exists at the Royal College of Defence Medicine; and what plans he has for future accommodation. [153885]

Mr. Caplin: Staff and students at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine are mainly housed in leased accommodation. The Ministry of Defence is considering a number of options for the future provision of Service accommodation in the Birmingham area.

Shipbuilding Industry

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the RAND Report on capacity in the UK shipbuilding industry. [153792]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has commissioned the RAND organisation to carry out a range of studies of the UK shipbuilding industry, including one examining the capacity, in terms of workforce and facilities, required to deliver the demanding future warship programme. RAND are due to report later this year.

Suez Medal

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many medals have been awarded for service in the Suez Canal Zone 1951–54; how many are still to be awarded to *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* Royal Air Force personnel; and what the timescale is for completing the presentation of outstanding awards. [153786]

Mr. Caplin: By the week ending 6 February 2004 a total of 3,901 Canal Zone clasps, either together with the Naval General Service Medal 1915–62 and General Service Medal 1918–62, as appropriate, or alone where the recipient had already received the medal for other campaign service, had been issued by the Ministry of Defence's four single Service medal offices.

It is not possible to say how many medals will be awarded for service in the Canal Zone between 1951–54 as it will depend entirely upon the number of valid claims that are received from veterans and their families in the coming months. However, such has been the success of our efforts to advertise the availability of the new clasp that nearly 33,000 applications have now been received.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the timetable for the awards to be made to those qualifying for a Suez Medal. [154751]

Mr. Caplin: There is no timetable for the award of the medal for service in the Suez Canal Zone.

Typhoon

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Typhoon aircraft will be ordered by each partner in the second tranche. [154681]

Mr. Ingram: Under the 4-nation memorandum of understanding, the United Kingdom has undertaken to order 89 Typhoon aircraft in the second Tranche, Germany 68, Italy 46 and Spain 33.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the cost of converting Typhoon to operate on the new aircraft carriers. [154682]

Mr. Ingram: As I have previously indicated, we have no plans, nor any requirement, for Typhoon to operate from our future aircraft carriers. I do not expect this position to change.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the second tranche of Typhoon fast jets will be ordered. [154501]

Mr. Ingram: Work is under way with our partner nations and industry to enable contracts for the second tranche of Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft to be placed as soon as possible.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list *(a)* each of the types of weapons of mass destruction that exist in the world and *(b)* the countries which possess them; and how many weapons are held by each country. [154283]

Mr. Hoon: There is no universally accepted definition of the phrase "weapons of mass destruction", but it is generally held to refer to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Under the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, China and Russia are recognised as nuclear weapon states, as defined in Article 9(3) of the Treaty. Additionally, India and Pakistan have tested nuclear devices. As set out in the Strategic Defence Review 1998, the UK has fewer than 200 operationally available nuclear warheads. None of the other states have publicly confirmed the size of their nuclear weapon stockpiles.

There are five States Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) (US, Russia, India, Albania and one other State Party) that have declared possession of chemical weapons. They are currently in the process of destroying them in accordance with their obligations under the Convention. The amount of chemical weapons originally declared is 69,869 metric tonnes, of which 27,773 metric tonnes is from the US, 40,000 metric tonnes from Russia, and 2,096 metric tonnes from the other states parties.

We welcome Libya's recent announcement that it is renouncing its WMD programmes. It has acceded to the CWC and the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention. It has announced its intention to sign an Additional Protocol with the IAEA and has undertaken to act in accordance with its provisions pending ratification.

We do not yet have a complete picture of Iraq's WMD programme related activities. The Iraq Survey Group's work is by no means completed. It remains our best means of discovering the truth about Iraq's WMD programmes. We have long had concerns about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of WMD, especially their capability to produce and develop nuclear weapons. We are actively supporting

the major diplomatic effort to try and resolve international concerns about North Korea's nuclear weapons programme. The UK remains concerned by the scope and scale of Iran's nuclear programme, and the state of its technical knowledge, which could assist in the production of both chemical and biological weapons. We are also aware of persistent reports that Syria is pursuing programmes to develop WMD and the means for their delivery.

We continue to encourage Israel to resolve international concerns about its nuclear status by acceding to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, as a non-nuclear weapons state.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Area Partnerships

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 401–02W, on Area Partnerships, how much each of the 88 local authorities has been allocated. [154611]

Yvette Cooper: The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) allocations for each local authority for the period 2001 to 2006 are tabled as follows.

£ million

Local authority	*NRF allocation 2001–02*	*NRF allocation 2002–03*	*NRF allocation 2003–04*	*Main NRF allocation 2004–05*	*Residual NRF allocation 2004–05*	*Total NRF allocation (main plus restdual) 2004–05*
Allerdale	0.427747	0.641621	0.855494	0.855494	—	0.855494
Ashfield	0.481805	0.722708	0.963610	0.963610	—	0.963610
Barking and Dagenham	0.816364	1.224546	1.632728	1.632728	—	1.632728
Barnsley	2.722069	4.083104	5.444138	5.444138	—	5.444138
Barrow-in-Furness	0.919191	1.378787	1.838382	1.838382	—	1.838382
Birmingham	11.021744	16.532616	22.043488	22.043488	—	22.043488
Blackburn with Darwen	2.167412	3.251118	4.334824	4.334824	—	4.334824
Blackpool	1.503944	2.255916	3.007888	3.007888	—	3.007888
Bolsover	0.734416	1.101624	1.468832	1.468832	0.417624	1.886456
Bolton	2.712853	4.069280	5.425706	5.425706	—	5.425706
Bradford	4.905949	7.358924	9.811898	9.811898	—	9.811898
Brent	1.139562	1.709343	2.279124	2.279124	—	2.279124
Brighton and Hove	0.684438	1.026657	1.368876	1.368876	—	1.368876
Bristol	1.782633	2.673950	3.565266	3.565266	1.013689	4.578955
Burnley	0.636635	0.954953	1.273270	1.273270	—	1.273270
Camden	2.109335	3.164003	4.218670	4.218670	1.199468	5.418138
Coventry	2.644775	3.967163	5.289550	5.289550	—	5.289550
Croydon	0.290624	0.435936	0.581248	0.581248	—	0.581248
Derby	1.625234	2.437851	3.250468	3.250468	—	3.250468
Derwentside	0.741155	1.111733	1.482310	1.482310	0.421456	1.903766
Doncaster	4.394925	6.592388	8.789850	8.789850	—	8.789850
Dudley	0.760282	1.140423	1.520564	1.520564	—	1.520564
Ealing	0.458538	0.687807	0.917076	0.917076	—	0.917076
Easington	2.216635	3.324953	4.433270	4.433270	1.260484	5.693754
Enfield	0.929797	1.394696	1.859594	1.859594	—	1.859594
Gateshead	2.321426	3.482139	4.642852	4.642852	—	4.642852
Great Yarmouth	0.993615	1.490423	1.987230	1.987230	—	1.987230
Greenwich	1.940726	2.911089	3.881452	3.881452	1.103589	4.985041
Hackney	5.882703	8.824055	11.765406	11.765406	3.345184	15.110590
Halton	1.964205	2.946308	3.928410	3.928410	1.116940	5.045350
Hammersmith and Fulham	0.516645	0.774968	1.033290	1.033290	—	1.033290
Haringey	2.667407	4.001111	5.334814	5.334814	1.516814	6.851628
Hartlepool	1.568759	2.353139	3.137518	3.137518	0.892071	4.029589
Hastings	0.687580	1.031370	1.375160	1.375160	—	1.375160
Hyndburn	0.646818	0.970227	1.293636	1.293636	—	1.293636
Islington	3.135010	4.702515	6.270020	6.270020	1.782715	8.052735
Kensington and Chelsea	0.540335	0.810503	1.080670	1.080670	—	1.080670
Kerrier	0.805244	1.207866	1.610488	1.610488	—	1.610488
Kingston upon Hull	3.753636	5.630454	7.507272	7.507272	2.134495	9.641767
Kirklees	1.496028	2.244042	2.992056	2.992056	—	2.992056
Knowsley	3.695469	5.543204	7.390938	7.390938	2.101419	9.492357
Lambeth	1.210843	1.816265	2.421686	2.421686	0.688542	3.110228
Leeds	4.197791	6.296687	8.395582	8.395582	—	8.395582
Leicester	4.188485	6.282728	8.376970	8.376970	—	8.376970
Lewisham	1.226253	1.839380	2.452506	2.452506	—	2.452506
Lincoln	0.200000	0.300000	0.400000	0.400000	—	0.400000
Liverpool	10.066353	15.099530	20.132706	20.132706	5.724205	25.856911
Luton	0.754933	1.132400	1.509866	1.509866	—	1.509866
Manchester	10.297541	15.446312	20.595082	20.595082	5.855669	26.450751
Mansfield	1.149321	1.723982	2.298642	2.298642	—	2.298642
Middlesbrough	2.624651	3.936977	5.249302	5.249302	1.492501	6.741803
Newcastle upon Tyne	3.421525	5.132288	6.843050	6.843050	—	6.843050

£ million

Local authority	NRF allocation 2001-02	NRF allocation 2002-03	NRF allocation 2003-04	Main NRF allocation 2004-05	Residual NRF allocation 2004-05	Total NRF allocation (main plus residual) 2004-05
Newham	6.665980	9.998970	13.331960	13.331960	3.790592	17.122552
North Tyneside	1.536790	2.305185	3.073580	3.073580	—	3.073580
Nottingham	4.622940	6.934410	9.245880	9.245880	2.628822	11.874702
Oldham	2.336988	3.505482	4.673976	4.673976	—	4.673976
Pendle	0.980471	1.470707	1.960942	1.960942	—	1.960942
Penwith	0.414573	0.621860	0.829146	0.829146	—	0.829146
Plymouth	1.057070	1.585605	2.114140	2.114140	—	2.114140
Portsmouth	0.478330	0.717495	0.956660	0.956660	—	0.956660
Preston	1.260217	1.890326	2.520434	2.520434	—	2.520434
Redcar and Cleveland	1.736069	2.604104	3.472138	3.472138	—	3.472138
Rochdale	2.438999	3.658499	4.877998	4.877998	—	4.877998
Rotherham	1.834303	2.751455	3.668606	3.668606	—	3.668606
Salford	2.720407	4.080611	5.440814	5.440814	1.546952	6.987766
Sandwell	4.025284	6.037926	8.050568	8.050568	2.288967	10.339535
Sedgefield	0.569463	0.854195	1.138926	1.138926	—	1.138926
Sefton	2.815650	4.223475	5.631300	5.631300	—	5.631300
Sheffield	4.790431	7.185647	9.580862	9.580862	—	9.580862
South Tyneside	2.691097	4.036646	5.382194	5.382194	1.530285	6.912479
Southampton	0.430890	0.646335	0.861780	0.861780	—	0.861780
Southward	3.956179	5.934269	7.912358	7.912358	2.249671	10.162029
St. Helens	1.936557	2.904836	3.873114	3.873114	—	3.873114
Stockton-on-Tees	1.926102	2.889153	3.852204	3.852204	—	3.852204
Stoke-on-Trent	2.016872	3.025308	4.033744	4.033744	—	4.033744
Sunderland	3.581885	5.372828	7.163770	7.163770	—	7.163770
Tameside	0.670115	1.005173	1.340230	1.340230	—	1.340230
Tower Hamlets	5.311820	7.967730	10.623640	10.623640	3.020552	13.644192
Wakefield	2.219657	3.329486	4.439314	4.439314	—	4.439314
Walsall	3.560975	5.341463	7.121950	7.121950	—	7.121950
Waltham Forest	1.276745	1.915118	2.553490	2.553490	—	2.553490
Wandsworth	0.200000	0.300000	0.400000	0.400000	—	0.400000
Wansbeck	0.689665	1.034498	1.379330	1.379330	0.392176	1.771506
Wear Valley	0.853107	1.279661	1.706214	1.706214	0.485117	2.191331
Westminster	0.748648	1.122972	1.497296	1.497296	—	1.497296
Wigan	1.362621	2.043932	2.725242	2.725242	—	2.725242
Wirral	2.537596	3.806394	5.075192	5.075192	—	5.075192
Wolverhampton	2.964135	4.446203	5.928270	5.928270	—	5.928270
Total	200.000000	300.000000	400.000000	400.000000	50.000000	450.000000

£ million

Local authority	Main NRF allocation 2005-06	Residual NRF allocation 2005-06	Total NRF allocation (main plus residual) 2005-06	Total main NRF allocation 2001-06	Total residual NRF allocation 2004-05 plus 2005-06	Total NRF allocation 2001-06
Allerdale	0.855494	—	0.855494	3.635850	—	3.635850
Ashfield	0.963610	—	0.963610	4.095343	—	4.095343
Barking and Dagenham	1.632728	—	1.632728	6.939094	—	6.939094
Barnsley	5.444138	—	5.444138	23.137587	—	23.137587
Barrow-in-Furness	1.838382	—	1.838382	7.813124	—	7.813124
Birmingham	22.043488	—	22.043488	93.684824	—	93.684824
Blackburn with Darwen	4.334824	—	4.334824	18.423002	—	18.423002
Blackpool	3.007888	—	3.007888	12.783524	—	12.783524
Bolsover	1.468832	1.044060	2.512892	6.242536	1.461684	7.704220
Bolton	5.425706	—	5.425706	23.059251	—	23.059251
Bradford	9.811898	—	9.811898	41.700567	—	41.700567
Brent	2.279124	—	2.279124	9.686277	—	9.686277
Brighton and Hove	1.368876	—	1.368876	5.817723	—	5.817723
Bristol	3.565266	2.534224	6.099490	15.152381	3.547913	18.700294
Burnley	1.273270	—	1.273270	5.411398	—	5.411398
Camden	4.218670	2.998670	7.217340	17.929348	4.198138	22.127486
Coventry	5.289550	—	5.289550	22.480588	—	22 480588
Croydon	0.581248	—	0.581248	2.470304	—	2.470304
Derby	3.250468	—	3.250468	13.814489	—	13.814489
Derwentside	1.482310	1.053639	2.535949	6.299818	1.475095	7.774913
Doncaster	8.789850	—	8.789850	37.356863	—	37.356863
Dudley	1.520564	—	1.520564	6.462397	—	6.462397
Ealing	0.917076	—	0.917076	3.897573	—	3.897573

£ million

Local authority	Main NRF allocation 2005–06	Residual NRF allocation 2005–06	Total NRF allocation (main plus residual) 2005–06	Total main NRF allocation 2001–06	Total residual NRF allocation 2004–05 plus 2005–06	Total NRF allocation 2001–06
Easington	4.433270	3.151209	7.584479	18.841398	4.411693	23.253091
Enfield	1.859594	—	1.859594	7.903275	—	7.903275
Gateshead	4.642852	—	4.642852	19.732121	—	19.732121
Great Yarmouth	1.987230	—	1.987230	8.445728	—	8.445728
Greenwich	3.881452	2.758972	6.640424	16.496171	3.862561	20.358732
Hackney	11.765406	8.362959	20.128365	50.002976	11.708143	61.711119
Halton	3.928410	2.792350	6.720760	16.695743	3.909290	20.605033
Hammersmith and Fulham	1.033290	—	1.033290	4.391483	—	4.391483
Haringey	5.334814	3.792035	9.126849	22.672960	5.308849	27.981809
Hartlepool	3.137518	2.230177	5.367695	13.334452	3.122248	16.456700
Hastings	1.375160	—	1.375160	5.844430	—	5.844430
Hyndburn	1.293636	—	1.293636	5.497953	—	5.497953
Islington	6.270020	4.456788	10.726808	26.647585	6.239503	32.887088
Kensington and Chelsea	1.080670	—	1.080670	4.592848	—	4.592848
Kerrier	1.610488	—	1.610488	6.844574	—	6.844574
Kingston upon Hull	7.507272	5.336238	12.843510	31.905906	7.470733	39.376639
Kirklees	2.992056	—	2.992056	12.716238	—	12.716238
Knowsley	7.390938	5.253547	12.644485	31.411487	7.354966	38.766453
Lambeth	2.421686	1.721356	4.143042	10.292166	2.409898	12.702064
Leeds	8.395582	—	8.395582	35.681224	—	35.681224
Leicester	8.376970	—	8.376970	35.602123	—	35.602123
Lewisham	2.452506	—	2.452506	10.423151	—	10.423151
Lincoln	0.400000	—	0.400000	1.700000	—	1.700000
Liverpool	20.132706	14.310513	34.443219	85.564001	20.034718	105.598719
Luton	1.509866	—	1.509866	6.416931	—	6.416931
Manchester	20.595082	14.639173	35.234255	87.529099	20.494842	108.023941
Mansfield	2.298642	—	2.298642	9.769229	—	9.769229
Middlesbrough	5.249302	3.731252	8.980554	22.309534	5.223753	27.533287
Newcastle upon Tyne	6.843050	—	6.843050	29.082963	—	29.082963
Newham	13.331960	9.476480	22.808440	56.660830	13.267072	69.927902
North Tyneside	3.073580	—	3.073580	13.062715	—	13.062715
Nottingham	9.245880	6.572056	15.817936	39.294990	9.200878	48.495868
Oldham	4.673976	—	4.673976	19.864398	—	19.864398
Pendle	1.960942	—	1.960942	8.334004	—	8.334004
Penwith	0.829146	—	0.829146	3.523871	—	3.523871
Plymouth	2.114140	—	2.114140	8.985095	—	8.985095
Portsmouth	0.956660	—	0.956660	4.065805	—	4.065805
Preston	2.520434	—	2.520434	10.711845	—	10.711845
Redcar and Cleveland	3.472138	—	3.472138	14.756587	—	14.756587
Rochdale	4.877998	—	4.877998	20.731492	—	20.731492
Rotherham	3.668606	—	3.668606	15.591576	—	15.591576
Salford	5.440814	3.867381	9.308195	23.123460	5.414333	28.537793
Sandwell	8.050568	5.722418	13.772986	34.214914	8.011385	42.226299
Sedgefield	1.138926	—	1.138926	4.840436	—	4.840436
Sefton	5.631300	—	5.631300	23.933025	—	23.933025
Sheffield	9.580862	—	9.580862	40.718664	—	40.718664
South Tyneside	5.382194	3.825713	9.207907	22.874325	5.355998	28.230323
Southampton	0.861780	—	0.861780	3.662565	—	3.662565
Southward	7.912358	5.624176	13.536534	33.627522	7.873847	41.501369
St. Helens	3.873114	—	3.873114	16.460735	—	16.460735
Stockton-on-Tees	3.852204	—	3.852204	16.371867	—	16.371867
Stoke-on-Trent	4.033744	—	4.033744	17.143412	—	17.143412
Sunderland	7.163770	—	7.163770	30.446023	—	30.446023
Tameside	1.340230	—	1.340230	5.695978	—	5.695978
Tower Hamlets	10.623640	7.551380	18.175020	45.150470	10.571932	55.722402
Wakefield	4.439314	—	4.439314	18.867085	—	18.867085
Walsall	7.121950	—	7.121950	30.268288	—	30.268288
Waltham Forest	2.553490	—	2.553490	10.852333	—	10.852333
Wandsworth	0.400000	—	0.400000	1.700000	—	1.700000
Wansbeck	1.379330	0.980441	2.359771	5.862153	1.372617	7.234770
Wear Valley	1.706214	1.212793	2.919007	7.251410	1.697910	8.949320
Westminster	1.497296	—	1.497296	6.363508	—	6.363508
Wigan	2.725242	—	2.725242	11.582279	—	11.582279
Wirral	5.075192	—	5.075192	21.569566	—	21.569566
Wolverhampton	5.928270	—	5.928270	25.195148	—	25.195148
Total	400.000000	125.000000	525.000000	1700.000000	175.000000	1875.000000

Note:
26 local authorities receiving NRF residual allocations.

Council Tax

Mr. Byers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the range of values would be for each council tax band at today's prices. [154879]

Mr. Raynsford: Using the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's quarterly index of house price movements, the average increase in prices in England from the second quarter (April–June) of 1991—approximately when the original council tax valuations were based—to the fourth quarter (October-December) of 2003 was 139 per cent.

If the current English council tax bands were uprated by this amount (and rounding to the nearest £5,000), the bands would be as follows:

	£
Band A	Up to 95,000
Band B	95,000 to 125,000
Band C	125,000 to 165,000
Band D	165,000 to 210,000
Band E	210,000 to 285,000
Band F	285,000 to 385,000
Band G	385,000 to 765,000
Band H	Over 765,000

This index is based only on sales of property and may not fully reflect changes in the value of social housing.

Elderly People (Safety)

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action the Government has taken to promote safety at home for elderly people. [153816]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

The Department continues to make available a range of safety material targeted at elderly people, and to work with partner organisations.

High-rise Housing

Mr. Burns: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* central and *(b)* local government regulations and policy governs whether families should be housed (i) in high-rise housing accommodation and (ii) on floors higher than the second floor of an apartment block. [154193]

Keith Hill: The allocation legislation requires that housing authorities ensure that reasonable preference for an allocation of accommodation is given to certain categories of persons. These include people living in insanitary, overcrowded and unsatisfactory housing conditions. The Office of the Deputy Prime minister has issued statutory guidance that provides housing authorities with examples of indicators which might be taken into account in determining whether people are living in unsatisfactory housing conditions. These include children in flats or maisonettes above the ground floor. There is nothing to prevent housing authorities devising their own local indicators in addition, or in place of this.

Housing

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many councils have been required to release reserve sites for housing development as a consequence of failing to meet house building targets. [154819]

Keith Hill: None.

Housing Stock Transfer

Mr. Purchase: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 748, how many of the 790,000 council homes have been transferred to arm's length management organisations; and what proportion of the extra £8 billion private investment to which he referred has been attracted to ALMOs. [154311]

Keith Hill: The figures quoted relate to transfer of homes to registered social landlords under the large scale voluntary transfer option, rather than homes managed by arm's length management organisations (ALMOs). ALMOs currently in the programme cover just under 500,000 dwellings and have been allocated nearly £900 million of public funding to bring homes up to the Decent Homes standard.

Local Authority Employees

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the proportion of local authority employees to adult population was in each *(a)* unitary authority, *(b)* metropolitan authority and *(c)* shire county on the latest date for which figures are available. [153601]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Information on full-time and part-time employee jobs in English local authorities is held by the Employers Organisation and data on the population in each English authority are available from the 2001 census. Using these data the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has calculated the proportion of local authority employees to total population in the categories of local authority requested. A table showing these data is available in the Library of the House. It should be noted that the population figures refer to the total population of each authority rather than just the adult population.

Pathfinder Projects

Mr. Pike: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of the housing renewal pathfinder project areas he has visited in the last 12 months. [154028]

Keith Hill: The Deputy Prime Minister has visited six of the nine housing renewal pathfinder project areas in the last 12 months.

Regional Government

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will list the proposed powers of regional assemblies; [154394]

(2) if he will list the responsibilities which he plans should not be devolved to regional assemblies. [154395]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Phil Hope) to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) on 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 347W.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's relations with the military regime in Burma. [155225]

Mr. Rammell: We have full diplomatic relations with Burma and continue to press the military regime to enter into a substantive and meaningful dialogue with all political parties and ethnic groups in Burma leading to national reconciliation, democratisation and full respect for human rights. We have repeatedly called on the regime to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, to release all political prisoners, and to re-open NLD offices in Burma.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress his Department is making in tackling the human rights situation in Burma *(a)* bilaterally and *(b)* in the UN. [155226]

Mr. Rammell: We continue to raise our concerns on human rights in Burma bilaterally and through the UN at every opportunity. We co-sponsored the UN General Assembly Human Rights Resolution on Burma last December and will play an active role in the forthcoming UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. We strongly support the efforts of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Sergio Pinheiro. The EU has repeatedly condemned Burma's lack of progress on forced labour, most recently at the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) meeting in Geneva on 20 November 2003.We fully support the work of the ILO and have called upon the Burmese authorities to end permanently the use of forced labour.

China

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the human rights record of China since the killings in Tiananmen Square in 1989, with particular reference to *(a)* the treatment of cyber-dissidents, *(b)* the treatment of Uighur separatists, *(c)* the use of torture and the death penalty and *(d)* respect for political and religious freedom in Tibet. [154646]

Mr. Rammell: We monitor the human rights situation in China closely and raise our concerns both at the biannual UK/China Human Rights Dialogue and at ministerial level meetings. Most recently I raised human rights issues with Vice Minister Zhang Yesui of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 17 December 2003.

The last round of our biannual UK/China Human Rights Dialogue was held in Beijing on 10 to 11 November 2003. We raised our concerns about a wide range of issues, including:

freedom of expression; and asked for further information and clemency for five internet activists;

the situation in Xinjiang where the UK delegation visited and discussed human rights with Xinjiang officials. A list of Uighur cases of concern was handed over;

the use of forced confessions; the application of the death penalty and lack of statistics on its application. We fund several projects in these sensitive areas; and

the situation in Tibet and encouraged China to continue its contact with representations of the Dalai Lama.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to oppose the lifting of the European Union arms embargo on China; and if he will make a statement. [154648]

Mr. Rammell: The European Council on 12 December 2003 invited the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) to re-examine the EU Arms Embargo on China. The GAERC met on 26 January 2004 and decided to remit the issue to the relevant working groups for detailed examination. The issue will revert to a future GAERC.

We welcome the review and are currently considering the UK's position. In the meantime, we will continue fully to implement the Arms Embargo.

Comoros Islands

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit the Comoros Islands; and if he will make a statement. [154083]

Mr. Mullin: I have no present plans to visit the Comoros Islands.

EU Advertising (Slovakia)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advertising the Government paid for on Slovak television concerning enlargement. [154480]

Mr. MacShane: None.

EU Presidency (UK)

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what preparatory unit has been established for the next UK Presidency of the EU; and what venues have been booked for British Presidency meetings. [154614]

Mr. MacShane: A small team is being set up within the European Union Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Other Government Departments are establishing their own Presidency units. The Cabinet Office European Secretariat will play an overall policy co-ordinating role.

During our Presidency we will hold two European Councils in Brussels. Other formal Ministerial Councils and meetings of officials will take place in Brussels and Luxembourg.

Some informal ministerial meetings will take place in the UK during the UK Presidency. Planning for these and other official level events is at an early stage, and neither dates nor venues have yet been finalised.

Government Payments

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 844W, if he will list payments made by the United Kingdom Government to the Governments of *(a)* Uzbekistan, *(b)* Turkmenistan, *(c)* Kazakhstan, *(d)* Kyrgyzstan, *(e)* Pakistan, *(f)* Georgia and *(g)* Azerbaijan since 1999–2000, broken down by purpose; and if he will make a statement. [154546]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) only holds information about payments made to the Governments mentioned through FCO accounts.

The following sums have been paid to the High Commission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in London in respect of refunds of VAT paid on items purchased for official use:

		£
26 October 1999	Computing equipment	214.82
30 November 1999	Furniture	8,483.71
22 March 2001	Electrical/wiring materials	1,810.36
22 March 2001	Electrical/wiring materials	1,957.41
19 June 2001	Electrical/wiring materials	708.77
25 November 2003	Building materials	50,027.77
22 January 2004	Building materials	115,105.00

Refunds of VAT on purchases of British manufactured goods (over £50) are made to Commonwealth missions, the Embassy of Ireland and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The concession dates back to the 1940s, at that time applying to Purchase Tax. It continued after the introduction of VAT in 1973 on the grounds of preserving customary practice.

The FCO has not made any payments to the other Governments listed during this period.

Payments will have been made at UK posts overseas to the Governments of these countries. However, this information is not held centrally, and can be obtained from posts only at disproportionate cost.

This answer covers only expenditure incurred by the FCO and not by HMG as a whole.

Iraq

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of Iraqi women who will be elected to the first Iraqi Parliament. [154118]

Mr. Rammell: We cannot estimate the number of women to be elected to the Transitional National Assembly. This is a matter for the Iraqi people to decide. The Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) is overseeing the drafting of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) to be completed by the end of February 2004. We are encouraging the IGC to promote in the TAL the fair representation of women in the Transitional National Assembly.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people in custody in Iraq have proven links to al-Qaeda, broken down by nationality; and how many of these are believed to have entered Iraq since 20 March 2003. [154279]

Mr. MacShane: Detainees in Iraq who may have links to al-Qaeda are being investigated by the Coalition Provisional Authority. It is the practice of successive governments not to comment on intelligence matters.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to *(a)* the UN and *(b)* the United States on (i) the future structure of the Iraqi Administration and (ii) self-determination for each of the main ethnic groups. [155182]

Mr. Rammell: We have regular discussions with the UN and the US about all aspects of Iraq's future. The structure of Iraq's Administration will be a matter for the Iraqi people to determine, with the assistance of the UN and the Coalition Provisional Authority, as laid down in Security Council Resolutions 1483 and 1511. We strongly support the territorial integrity of Iraq and the right of the Iraqi people freely to determine their own political future, as reaffirmed in those resolutions.

IT Contracts

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list information technology contracts in his Department with a value of above £20 million in each of the last 10 years; what the inception date for each system was; when it became fully functional; when it became fully debugged; and what the cost of over-runs has been. [146193]

Mr. Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 26 February 2003, *Official Report*, column 588W. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Telecommunications Network (FTN) has now been successfully rolled out to 192 posts. Beyond the contracts for FTN and "Prism", the only ICT project which has cost the FCO collectively in excess of £20 million in the last ten years has been our global IT infrastructure, Firecrest. The Firecrest project was led by our principal internal service provider, FCO Services, and was completed in October 2003. The internal costs of the project are considerably greater than original 1997 estimates, reflecting the FCO's decision to expand Firecrest from a limited deployment to some 71 posts into a single, global IT platform for over 200 posts. The replanned project stages were completed on time and budgets were subject to proper internal approvals.

Technical issues have delayed the implementation of the Prism programme (providing financial and human resources systems) by some months. Final preparations are now under way to introduce elements of the programme in the coming weeks, with the full package being introduced at the start of the next financial year.

All systems have required some adaptation and thorough testing before being released, so no significant de-bugging has been required once the systems have been rolled out.

Kalahari Bushmen

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Botswana regarding the forced resettlement of the Kalahari Bushmen. [153770]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no recent discussions with the Government of Botswana on the relocation of the Basarwa from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

I raised the subject of the Basarwa with President Mogae at CHOGM in December 2003. The British High Commission in Gaborone also discuss the issue regularly in their contacts with the Government of Botswana.

Tristan da Cunha

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much financial support has been given to *(a)* St. Helena, *(b)* Tristan da Cunha and *(c)* the Ascension Islands in each of the last five years. [154200]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: I have been asked to reply. DFID bilateral disbursements for St. Helena in the Financial years 1998–99 to 2002–03 were as follows:

	£000
1998–99	8,805
1999–2000	9,363
2000–01	10,116
2001–02	10,106
2002–03	9,555

These figures include some modest support for Tristan da Cunha, totalling less than £200,000 annually. We do not provide any direct bilateral assistance to Ascension Island.

St. Helena, Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Island also receive some assistance from the FCO Good Governance Fund and Economic Diversification Programme. Those figures for the same period are as follows:

	St. Helena	*Ascension Island*	*Tristan da Cunha*
1998–99	163,274	—	—
1999–2000	231,040	64,410	33,563
2000–01	212,002	126,859	—
2001–02	321,359	288,445	9,504
2002–03	436,428	15,000	187,932

Since 1995, St. Helena has also been allocated a total of 14.35 million euros from European Union funds.

Overseas Students

Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many overseas students applied for visas to study in the UK in the last year for which figures are available; and how many of those were renewals. [154119]

Mr. Mullin: During the financial year 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003, the latest year for which statistics are available, 181,905 student applications were received at our diplomatic posts worldwide. Figures are not collated on the number of student visa applications submitted overseas by applicants who had previously obtained student visas.

Nicholas Baker

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps have been taken since 5 November 2003 to secure the release of Mr. Nicholas Baker from prison in Japan; and if he will make a statement. [153463]

Mr. Mullin: Mr. Baker's lawyer made an application to lodge an appeal on his behalf on 20 January. The appeal will be heard by the Japanese court on 23 March. We continue to monitor the case and to offer Mr. Baker and his family consular assistance.

TRANSPORT

Pensioner Travel Concessions

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will fund off-peak travel for all pensioners in England. [154291]

Mr. McNulty: The Government provides funding for off peak concessionary travel for all pensioners (women over 60, men over 65) through the annual grant settlement to local authorities. This funding also includes concessions for off-peak travel for men aged 60–64 and for disabled people. Local authorities must provide at least half fare concessions on local bus services with no charge for the pass and are free to offer alternative and more generous schemes. Local authorities in England spent around £500 million on concessionary travel in 2002–03. This figure takes account of the extra £54 million we provided to local authorities in 2001–02 to cover the costs of implementing the statutory half fare minimum requirement. We provided a further £50 million in 2003–04 to cover the additional cost of extending concessionary travel to men aged 60–64.

From 1 May 2003, half-fares have been made available on many scheduled long-distance coach services for people aged 60 years and over and for disabled people. We are providing an extra £10 million per year to operators to fund the scheme.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the new guidelines relating to the erection of speed cameras will cover existing cameras as well as new cameras. [148412]

Mr. Jamieson: The safety camera programme board produces a "Handbook of rules and guidelines for the operation of the national road safety camera programme for England and Wales" covering the assessment of proposed sites and the regular review of existing sites, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House. The handbook is kept under review.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speed cameras were in place on *(a)* 1 January and *(b)* 1 January in each of the previous eight years in each of the local authorities in greater London. [148437]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 19 January 2004]:* We do not hold information centrally for camera operations other than those operated within the Safety Camera Partnerships. London established such a partnership in July 2002. From information provided by the partnership, the number of approved fixed speed camera locations established in each local authority area since then is as shown in the following table.

Fixed speed cameras in greater London	*2002*	*2003 additional locations*	*2004 proposed additional locations*
City	—	—	—
Westminster	—	—	2
Camden	—	—	2
Islington	—	4	2
Hackney	—	1	2
Tower Hamlets	—	15	2
Greenwich	—	—	2
Lewisham	—	2	2
Southwark	2	—	2
Lambeth	—	4	2
Wandsworth	—	—	2
Hammersmith and Fulham	—	—	2
Kensington and Chelsea	—	—	—
Waltham Forest	4	1	2
Redbridge	1	—	2
Havering	—	—	2
Barking	—	1	2
Newham	—	—	2
Bexley	—	—	2
Bromley	—	—	2
Croydon	—	—	2
Sutton	—	—	2
Merton	—	—	2
Kingston	2	—	2
Richmond	1	1	2
Hounslow	—	2	2
Hillingdon	—	—	2
Ealing	—	3	2
Brent	—	1	2
Harrow	1	—	2
Barnet	—	—	—
Haringey	—	—	2
Enfield	3	1	2
Total	14	36	60

In addition to these fixed site camera sites there are currently two approved mobile camera locations.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 27 January, *Official Report*, columns 243–4W, on speed cameras, how much was raised in fines by the Essex Safety Camera Partnership in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003, broken down by (i) court proceedings and (ii) fixed penalties. [152695]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* The information on 2002 court proceedings and fixed penalties for motoring offences will be available from the Home Office in the Spring of 2004 with 2003 data becoming available late 2004.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Written Answers of 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 826W, on speed cameras, what the reason is for the difference of £520,357 between the two amounts of money in the answers; and if he will make a statement as to what the £520,357 has been used for. [153591]

Mr. Jamieson: Written Question 151354 concerned the amount of fixed penalty fine receipts from Safety Camera offences in Essex in 2001–02 (£3,524,120). Written Question 151355 concerned the amount disbursed to the Essex Speed Camera Partnership for the operation of the safety cameras (£3,003,763). The other portion of the fine receipts (£520,357) accrued to the Consolidated Fund.

Banned Airlines

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 26 January, *Official Report*, column 33W, on banned airlines, what restrictions have been placed on which aircraft operating in *(a)* Swiss, *(b)* Belgian and *(c)* Dutch airspace; why the restrictions have been imposed; and which airlines operate these aircraft. [154570]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 12 January to the hon. Member for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, *Official Report*, column 546W, which explains why we are unable to provide information about restrictions imposed by other states.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what amounts were involved in each case. [153867]

Mr. McNulty: The Department for Transport was formed on 29 May 2002. The department has no record of any staff being subject to any of the actions listed since that date.

Civil Servants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150270]

Mr. McNulty: I refer my hon. Friend to the pursuant answer given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1084–86WJ.

Collapsible Plates

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers there are to permit the installation of collapsible plates to enforce one-way traffic on public highways. [154172]

Mr. Jamieson: Where the passage, or the passage in any direction, of vehicles is restricted by a traffic regulation order Sections 92 (outside London) and 94(2) (London) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 permit the placing of such bollards or other obstructions, at the point of restriction, as a traffic authority consider appropriate for preventing their passage. Collapsible plates are normally used to protect entrances to facilities off the public highway such as car parks. Whether their use on a public highway to control the direction of traffic flow is practicable and safe would need very careful consideration.

Consultancy Fees

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on consultancy fees by *(a)* his Department and its predecessors, *(b)* Network Rail and *(c)* London Underground in the last three years. [151480]

Dr. Howells: The Department was formed on 29 May 2002. Orders for consultancy to the value of £123.6 million were raised in 2002–03 and £42.1 million in the first nine months of 2003–04.

Network Rail is in the private sector and the Department does not hold details of their spend on consultancy.

London Underground has provided the following information for the last three financial years on consultancy costs: 2000–01 £44.3 million; 2001–02 £42.6 million; 2002–03 £52.O million. These figures do not include spending on external consultancy by the infrastructure companies, as this information is not held by London Underground. However, they do include the consultancy costs arising from work on the PPP, which totals £103.5 million since March 1998, as explained in the written statement made by my hon. Friend, the parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Mr. McNulty) on 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 121WS. Responsibility for London Underground transferred from central Government to Transport for London (TfL) and the Greater London Authority in July 2003. Expenditure by London Underground is now a matter for TfL and the Mayor.

Consultations

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those individuals and organisations to whom *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its executive agencies and *(c)* the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultations (i) The future development of air transport in the United Kingdom: Northern Ireland: a national consultation, (ii) Abandoned cars: a consultation document, (iii) Draft directions and guidance to the Strategic Rail Authority: consultation paper and (iv) The future of aviation: the Government's consultation document on air transport policy: a report on the response to the public consultation; and from whom each received a response in each case. [152075]

Mr. McNulty: Government are committed to ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are identified and involved in consultation exercises. All the consultations referred to were undertaken by the Department; executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies were not involved.

The consultation documents were issued to interested parties and made available on the department's web-site. As the volume of information requested is considerable, a summary of the information requested is provided below. Details of organisations and individuals who were issued with copies of the consultation documents and those that replied will be placed in the House Library.

(i) The future development of air transport in the United Kingdom: Northern Ireland: a national consultation

This consultation started in August 2002 and ended on 30 June 2003, 16000 copies of the consultation documents were issued to over 1100 organisations or individuals. There were 257 replies of which 19 requested privacy and 15 were anonymous.

(ii) Abandoned cars: a consultation document

This consultation started on 31 October 2001 and ended on 31 January 2002. Over 650 copies of the consultation documents were issued, there were 341 replies.

(iii) Draft directions and guidance to the Strategic Rail Authority: consultation paper

This consultation started on 29 June 2001 and ended on 21 September 2001. The consultation documents were formally issued to 32 specialist organisations. There were 84 replies, of which one requested privacy.

(iv) The future of aviation: the Government's consultation document on air transport policy: a report on the response to the public consultation.

This document is in fact a report which summarises the responses to the public consultation document "The Future of Aviation".

It was not itself subject to consultation and was published only on the then DTLR web-site.

"The Future of Aviation" consultation itself started in December 2000 and ended on 12 April 2001. The consultation documents were issued to 1000 organisations, there were 561 replies.

Department Branding

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department and its predecessors spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* counsultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154069]

Mr. McNulty: The Department spent less than £25,000, from within existing budgets, to make the required changes to the departmental logo, stationery, signage and web site design in 2002–03. The work was carried out by contractors under our normal framework agreements for design and print of paper and electronic publications.

No costs have been incurred in 2003–04. Costs for previous years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Minutes

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether it is his Department's policy to make notes of *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations involving Ministers; and under what circumstances no notes would be made. [149804]

Mr. McNulty: The Department follows the central "Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers" which makes clear that good record management procedures are necessary not least to ensure accountability and provide an audit trail. Among the records covered by the guidance are Ministers' meetings and telephone conversations.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of staff employed within his Department are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145925]

Mr. McNulty: I refer my hon. Friend to the pursuant answer given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1084–86W.

Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many information technology projects within the Driver, Vehicle and Operator group are *(a)* under way and *(b)* planned; what estimate he has made of the (i) cost and (ii) timescale of each project; which of the projects underway will be completed within its original budget and timescale; and what assessment he has made of the benefits to be delivered when each project is completed. [153202]

Mr. Jamieson: There are 37 IT projects under way in Agencies within the Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group, at a total Departmental investment cost of some £173m. These are to be delivered over the next 2–3 years and will bring a range of benefits including operating efficiency, better customer service and improved enforcement.

There are further 22 IT projects being planned at present.

I have placed details of these projects in the Libraries of the House.

Exhaust Emissions

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the comparative motor vehicle exhaust emission statistics are for *(a)* liquefied petroleum gas, *(b)* compressed natural gas, *(c)* petrol and *(d)* diesel. [153671]

Mr. Jamieson: The comparative statistics in the tables are taken from the joint DfT/HMT consultation 'Road fuel gases and their contribution to clean low-carbon transport' released in June 2003.

The figures allow a comparison of the mandatory European emission standards for new petrol and diesel vehicles in comparison with typical emissions from LPG and Natural Gas vehicles.

Several sources of uncertainty arise when assessing the performance of LPG vehicles. The level of emissions improvement in LPG cars depends heavily on the particular engines and conversions involved and on the standard of conversion. For these reasons, absolute comparison of LPG and conventional cars is not possible. The table gives an indication of the comparative figures.

Emission limit levels for new passenger cars—Conventional fuel cars and LPG cars

	Diesel (g/km)		Petrol (g/km)[1]
	NO_x	PM	NO_x
Conventional fuel cars—EU emission limits			
Euro III—mandatory from 2001	0.50	0.05	0.15
Euro IV—mandatory from 2006	0.25	0.025	0.08
LPG cars—indicative performance[2]			LPG NO_x (g/km)
2002–03—typical powershift approved aftermarket conversion	n/a	n/a	0.123
2002–03—typical OEM ('Original Equipment Manufacturer') LPG car	n/a	n/a	0.035

[1] No PM limits for petrol or LPG vehicles, since emissions are very low.
[2] Data provided by Energy Saving Trust

Compressed natural gas is primarily used as an alternative fuel for heavy goods vehicles. The following table was included in the road fuel gas consultation document and shows the comparative performance of a natural gas version of one widely used vehicle, compared to EU diesel standards.

Natural gas emissions—performance of a Scania re-engineered vehicle, compared to EU limit values heavy duty vehicles g/kwh[1]

Emission limits	Test cycle	NO_x	PM_{10}
Diesel vehicle			
Euro III	[2]ETC	5	[3]0.16 and 0.21
Euro IV	ETC	3.5	0.03
Euro V	ETC	2.0	0.03
Natural gas vehicle			
CNG Scania vehicle[4]	ETC	0.96	0.007

Source:
[1] http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/automotive/pagesback/pollutant_emission/pollutant.pdf
[2] European Transient Cycle
[3] For engines having a swept volume of less than 0.75 dm3 per cylinder and a rated power speed of more than 3,000 min-1
[4] CNG Emission Tests based on Scania re-engineering programme Millbrook Vehicle Emissions Laboratory g/kwh

Grand Prix

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking in conjunction with *(a)* the Highways Agency and *(b)* other interested parties to facilitate access to the Silverstone circuit for the next Grand Prix weekend, with particular attention to hours of peak traffic flow on each of the three days of the meeting. [152565]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency is working closely with all agencies involved in the Silverstone Grand Prix to produce a traffic management plan that meets the needs of those travelling to and from the Circuit as well as local communities and other road users.

Highways Agency

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in what way the Highways Agency takes account of the views of neighbouring local authorities when major changes to trunk roads are under consideration. [154760]

Mr. Jamieson: Major changes to trunk roads normally arise from the Government's programme of multi-modal or road based studies and this process involves full local and region wide consultation with statutory bodies and local stakeholders. This would include both the local highway and planning authorities. Once the Highways Agency is asked to develop schemes in more detail local public consultation is carried out into options.

Neighbouring authorities would normally be invited to comment on proposals if the road changes could significantly affect traffic in their area. Should orders under the Highways Act be required there would be further opportunity for comment.

M2

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the noise mitigation work on the Bredgar section of the M2 will commence; and if he will make a statement. [152116]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The Bredgar section of the M2 meets the criteria for the Government's £5 million annual ring fenced noise mitigation budget but due to the number of other pressing cases, has a lower priority. However this section of the M2 will shortly require resurfacing for maintenance reasons, using the quieter surfacing materials that will help reduce the traffic noise. The Highways Agency will aim to resurface this section of the M2 in the 2005–06 financial year, subject to funding being available.

Rail Authorities

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people are employed by *(a)* the Strategic Rail Authority, *(b)* the Health and Safety Executive railway branch, *(c)* the Office of the Rail Regulator and *(d)* Department of Transport railway divisions. [151479]

Dr. Howells: Staff numbers for the Strategic Rail Authority, the Health and Safety Executive and the Office of the Rail Regulator are contained in the relevant organisation's Annual Reports. Copies of such reports are routinely placed in the Libraries of the House. As at 1 April 2003, 83 staff were employed in my Department's Rail Directorate.

Railways

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many SPADs there have been on the railway network in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [151482]

Dr. Howells: The Health and Safely Executive (HSE) advise that for the 12 month period to 31 December 2003 there were 396 signals passed at danger (SPADs) on the main line railway in Great Britain. This compares

with earlier years totals of 383 for 2002, 483 for 2001, 479 for 2000 and 618 for 1999, the year of the Ladbroke Grove crash. Detailed information and analysis of SPADs can be obtained from the HSE's monthly SPAD reports, copies of which are available from the House Library.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans Network Rail has to expand capacity on routes into London termini from stations in commuter range. [151485]

Dr. Howells: The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has produced a 'Capacity Utilisation Policy' which aims to make the most efficient use of the existing network. A copy of the document is posted on the SRA's website at www.sra.gov.uk. Individual 'Route Utilisation Strategies' will now be developed, and these will help to inform the need for any future infrastructure enhancements.

Road Accidents

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated cost to public funds is of *(a)* a fatal road crash, *(b)* a road crash involving a serious injury and *(c)* a road crash involving a slight injury; and what the costs were in each case in 1994. [154703]

Mr. Jamieson: The values currently used to estimate the benefits of the avoidance of road accidents are set out in the "Highways Economic Note No.1: 2002 Valuation of the Benefits of Prevention of Road Accidents and Casualties" a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

These values, based on 2002 casualty data, were *(a)* fatal £1,447,490, *(b)* serious £168,260, *(c)* slight £16,750. These amounts are the values to be used in cost benefit analysis. They take account of medical costs, lost production, human costs based on willingness to pay for reduction of risk, the costs of police and courts, insurance administration, and property damage. Included within these values are the cost to public funds for hospital and ambulance costs and the costs of police and courts. In 2002, these costs were £6,860, £11,900 and £1,020 for fatal, serious and slight accidents respectively. The lost production element includes social security costs but these are not separately estimated. The equivalent estimates for 1994 for the avoidance of road accidents were *(a)* fatal £913,140, *(b)* serious £108,080, and *(c)* slight £10,630. In 1994 the costs for hospital and ambulance and police and courts were £5,120, £8,330 and £700 for fatal, serious and slight accidents respectively.

Rural Speed Limits

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when guidelines for rural speed limits will be made available to local authorities. [154814]

Mr. Jamieson: Guidance to local authorities on the setting of local speed limits, including rural speed limits, already exists and is contained in Department of Transport Circular Roads 1/93. The Department plans to review and update the guidance, and will be consulting local authorities and other stakeholders on the matter in the next few months.

Speed Cameras (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when speed cameras were first introduced *(a)* in Prittlewell Chase and *(b)* on the A127 within the boundaries of Southend; and how many have been introduced since this date. [153809]

Mr. Jamieson: From information provided by the Essex Safety Camera Partnership, the first speed camera to be used in Prittlewell Chase was a mobile unit in February 2001. A second mobile site location was subsequently approved and was first used in March 2001. The first speed camera introduced on the A127 was a fixed unit placed in 2001. A further four fixed cameras were introduced during 2003.

Traffic Lights (Sheppey)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the Highways Agency research into new traffic lights at Cowstead Corner, Sheppey. [152109]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The Highways Agency has studied the feasibility of installing signals at the A249 Cowstead Corner junction. The Study concluded that the installation of traffic signals would increase queuing times during off peak periods and recommended that this scheme should not go ahead. However an improved roundabout junction at Cowstead Corner will be provided as part of the new A249 Iwade Bypass to Queenborough Scheme. Work is due to start in spring 2004.

Given the frequency of routine studies of this kind, it is not usual for them to be published. If demand requires, the Highways Agency will make the information available on request. However decisions on this will be on a case by case basis and dependent on the commercial sensitivity of the report produced.

Train Rolling Stock

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to protect passenger interests from leasing contracts for train rolling stock that provide comparatively poor value for money. [153732]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1310W.

Train Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [154698]

Mr. McNulty: The Secretary of State regularly travels by all modes of public transport. My right hon. Friend last travelled by train in connection with his ministerial duties last week.

Uninsured Cars

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* untaxed, *(b)* uninsured and *(c)* uninsured and untaxed cars there are in the UK. [153938]

Mr. Jamieson: The 2002 estimate of the number of unlicensed (i.e. untaxed) vehicles is £1.76 million, of which 161,568 were declared as SORN[1]. This estimate includes £1.19 million vehicles in the car and light van category, of which 104,419 were declared as SORN.

Estimates from the insurance industry are that there are about 1.25 million motorists driving whilst uninsured.

I understand that many of the vehicles which are unlicensed are also uninsured. My Department is currently undertaking research to estimate the number of vehicles that are unlicensed, uninsured and without a valid MoT Certificate.

[1] Statutory Off-Road Notification (SORN) is a system by which vehicle keepers who tell the DVLA that they are taking their vehicle off the road are not obliged to tax them.

Source:

Vehicle Excise Duty Evasion 2002 published by the Office of National Statistics.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many owners of untaxed foreign cars were traced and brought into the car tax regime in the last year for which figures are available; and what recent estimate he has made of the number of untaxed foreign owned cars in the United Kingdom. [153429]

Mr. Jamieson: International agreements govern the use of motor vehicles in international traffic. The main principle is that a vehicle properly registered, taxed, insured and tested in its home country should not be subject to domestic laws of the host country during a temporary visit.

DVLA does not have information on the number of foreign owned cars registered in GB or those which are evading tax. Discussions are taking place with police and local authorities in an attempt to quantify the extent of the problem.

Vehicle Fuels

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles he estimates are powered by *(a)* liquefied petroleum gas, *(b)* compressed natural gas, *(c)* petrol and *(d)* diesel, broken down by (i) cars, (ii) buses, (iii) coaches and (iv) trucks in (A) the UK, (B) the North West, (C) Lancashire and (D) Chorley. [154318]

Mr. Jamieson: The following tables show the numbers of cars, buses/coaches and trucks broken down by fuel type—gas, petrol and diesel—for Great Britain, the North West, Lancashire and Chorley, at the end of 2002. Unfortunately, data is only available for Great Britain and not for the UK. Gas refers to vehicles powered by gas, petrol/gas, gas/bi-fuel and gas/diesel, as available data is not broken down by liquefied petroleum gas or compressed natural gas. Further, the available data is not broken down separately by buses and coaches.

	Gas	*Petrol*	*Diesel*
United Kingdom			
Cars	28,841	21,839,478	3,912,375
Buses/Coaches	147	1,238	90,933
Trucks	247	2,499	422,457
North West			
Cars	2,828	2,421,026	451,778
Buses/Coaches	13	131	10,918
Trucks	22	338	58,934
Lancashire			
Cars	597	491,703	100,857
Buses/Coaches	1	28	1,958
Trucks	8	59	11,076
Chorley			
Cars	69	38,897	8,444
Buses/Coaches		1	59
Trucks		8	1,132

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* suspended, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* prosecuted and *(d)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved in each of the cases listed were. [154373]

Mr. Lammy: None.

Census (1911)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to his answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1112W, on the 1911 Census, for what reasons the 1921, 1951 and 1961 census records for England and Wales are listed in Public Records Act Instruments No. 5, No. 23 and No. 38; and whether those census records are closed to public inspection solely under the provisions of Public Records Act Instrument No.12. [154025]

Mr. Leslie: Under S.3 (4) of the Public Records Act 1958, public records are usually transferred to the National Archives or an approved place of deposit not later than 30 years after their creation. However, they may be retained in departments if they are required for administrative purposes or another special reason. In these cases departments have to obtain the approval of the Lord Chancellor, after he has received the views of his Advisory Council on National Records and Archives. The present position is that Lord Chancellor's Instruments numbers 38 (1996) and 63 (2001) sanction the retention of the 1921, 1951 and 1961 census records by the Office for National Statistics for administrative purposes.

Lord Chancellor's Instrument number 12 (1966) gives effect to the closure period of 100 years, which applies to decennial census returns.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to his answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1112W, on the 1911 Census, how many applications were approved in each year from 1999 to 2003, under the provisions of section 5 (1) of the Public Records Act 1958, to reduce previously determined periods of closure on departmental records. [153979]

Mr. Leslie: Under section 5(1) of the Public Records Act 1958 the following number of applications to reduce previously determined periods of closure on departmental records were approved:

	Applications
1999	157
2000	84
2001	75
2002	161
2003	175

Criminal Cases (Costs)

Ian Lucas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average cost was per case for magistrates courts criminal cases dealt with in England and Wales by *(a)* solicitors in private practice and *(b)* the Criminal Defence Service in the last year for which figures are available. [153520]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The amount of money charged for private work by a solicitor, not funded by the Criminal Defence Service in private practice, for magistrates courts cases is a matter between the solicitor and client and as such this information is not held centrally.

(b) The average solicitor defence costs for a publicly funded magistrates court case paid from the Criminal Defence Service in 2002–03 was £515.

Honours System

Mr. Amess: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations his Department has received about reforming the honours system. [152603]

Mr. Leslie: None.

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when Sir Hayden Phillips started his review of the honours system; what the remit is of his review; when he is due to finish it; and if he will make a statement. [152962]

The Prime Minister: I have been asked to reply.

The current review began in the summer of 2003. The review's remit is to consider how to introduce greater transparency into the honours process and how to ensure the Honours List is representative of society. Sir Hayden Phillips will deliver his report when it is completed.

House of Lords

Mr. Amess: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many meetings he has had with Peers to discuss reforming the House of Lords. [154428]

Mr. Leslie: Since taking office on the 12 June 2003, I have had seven separate meetings with Peers and Bishops scheduled to discuss reforming the House of Lords.

Hutton Inquiry

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the cost of the Hutton Inquiry. [152966]

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total cost was of the Hutton Inquiry. [152721]

Mr. Leslie: The precise cost is still being determined and we will publish the figure once it is available

Judges

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many complaints he has received in the last 12 months from members of the *(a)* legal profession and *(b)* public, concerning the competence of named judges; and if he will make a statement. [154502]

Mr. Leslie: From 1 January to 31 December 2003, 1,113 complaints about members of the judiciary were received in the Judicial Correspondence Unit. The Unit does not keep statistics to allow the identification of complaints relating to 'judicial competence'. However, figures for the number of complaints relating to judicial decisions are available and show that 455 such complaints were received. Of these, 11 came from members of the legal profession and the remaining 444 from members of the public.

The principle of judicial independence, which is central to our constitutional arrangements, means that it is not open to the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor or his Department to consider complaints about judicial decisions. However, the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor does consider complaints about the personal conduct of individual Judges and other judicial office holders.

Judicial Appointments

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Lord Chancellor's joint working party on the appointment of QCs and judges will next meet. [153690]

Mr. Leslie: It is planned to reconvene the Joint Working Party on Equal Opportunities in Judicial Appointments and Silk in the next couple of months to discuss the outcome of last year's consultation paper on the future of judicial appointments and issues concerning diversity in the judiciary.

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of *(a)* magistrates and *(b)* judges are from an ethnic minority group. [153711]

Mr. Leslie: There are 24,419 magistrates in England and Wales excluding the Duchy of Lancaster (where the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster is responsible for appointments). There are 3,925 magistrates in the Duchy of Lancaster bringing the overall total of magistrates to 28,344. In England and Wales (excluding the Duchy) 1,490 magistrates declare themselves to be from a black and ethnic minority (BME) group, which is 6.1 per cent. In the Duchy of Lancaster there are 219 magistrates from BME groups, which is 5.6 per cent. Therefore the overall total of magistrates from a BME group is 1,709 which is 6 per cent. As at 1 January 2004, of 3,613 judicial officers in England and Wales (excluding tribunals), 130 declared themselves to be of minority ethnic origin. This represents 3.6 per cent. of the total. The following table gives a breakdown of judges in post for the main judicial offices, who have declared themselves to be of minority ethnic origin.

Legal Aid

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of separating the legal aid budget into separate accounts for *(a)* civil, including family, *(b)* criminal and *(c)* asylum cases. [153354]

Mr. Lammy: Separate accounts are already prepared for civil including family, criminal, and asylum. Asylum legal aid forms part of a single fund covering the Home Office and Department for Constitutional Affairs asylum and immigration expenditure. Criminal and civil legal aid are contained within the DCA Departmental Expenditure Limit.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was paid in salaries to those employed in dealing with or administering the work of the Legal Aid Board in 1996; and if he will make a statement. [154288]

Mr. Lammy: It is not possible to provide the information in the form requested, as the Legal Aid Board did not calculate salaries on a calendar year basis. The total amount paid in salaries and wages to those employed by the Legal Aid Board in the financial year 1996–97 was £22,003,000.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many solicitors firms in Wrexham carried out publicly funded matrimonial legal help work in the last three years for which records are available; [154021]

(2) how much has been spent on family mediation in Wrexham from the Legal Help Fund; [154034]

(3) how many matrimonial matter legal help starts were *(a)* allocated and *(b)* used in Wrexham in the last three years for which figures are available; [154035]

(4) how much was paid to solicitors' firms in Wrexham for matrimonial legal help work in the last three years for which records are available. [154036]

Mr. Lammy: The following table indicates the number of family contractors, the number of family legal help matter starts allocated and started, and the cost of claims for those matters, in Wrexham over the last three years.

In addition to these contracts, the North Wales Family Mediation Service is based in Llandudno and has outposts in Wrexham and Bangor. The service undertakes a large amount of work from the Wrexham outpost, but the Legal Services Commission (LSC) is unable to quantify the breakdown of work undertaken geographically and how much of the money the LSC paid the service overall relates specifically to Wrexham. In 2002–03 the LSC paid the service a total of £58,562.59.

Table 1: Family legal help provision in Wrexham

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Number of family legal help contracts	10	9	9	8
Number of family legal help matter starts awarded	1,131	1,276	1,326	1,084
Number of family legal help matters started	960	1,085	1,109	[1]—
Cost of claims for family legal help work (£)	115,427	162,721	226,206	[1]—

[1] Full year figures are not available.

Legal Services Commission

Nick Harvey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was paid in salaries to those employed in dealing with or administering the work of the Legal Services Commission during calendar year 2003; and if he will make a statement. [154287]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission is not able to provide the information in the exact form requested, as it does not calculate salaries on a calendar year basis. The total amount paid in salaries and wages to those employed by the Legal Services Commission in the financial year 2002–03 was £35,056,000.

Queen's Counsel

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on progress with the review of the Queen's Counsel system. [154498]

Mr. Leslie: The Government are considering the issues and we hope to make a statement soon.

Security Passes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [151581]

Mr. Leslie: In the last 12 months, 113 security passes have been reported lost and 16 reported stolen by staff within the Department for Constitutional Affairs. One security pass has been reported lost in the Scotland Office and there have been no reported lost or stolen passes in the Wales Office.

When a security pass is reported lost or stolen, appropriate steps are taken to reduce the risk of unauthorised access into any of the Department's buildings.

Sentencing (Video Links)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to extend the use of video links for the purpose of sentencing, where appropriate. [151778]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Live video links between courts and prisons can currently be used for preliminary court hearings and the Government are considering whether, subject to the provision of suitable safeguards, these can be extended to sentencing.

PRIME MINISTER

BBC (Government Representations)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister what record is kept of representations made to the BBC by the Government; and by whom. [154813]

The Prime Minister: No central record is kept.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Webb: To ask the Prime Minister how many staff in his Office have been *(a)* suspended, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* prosecuted and *(d)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved in each of those cases were. [154650]

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware, none.

Business Social and Environmental Impact Reports

Andy King: To ask the Prime Minister how many FTSE 350 companies have *(a)* made representations to him regarding his challenge of October 2000 to produce reports on their social and environmental impacts and *(b)* published such reports. [154274]

The Prime Minister: I have received eight corporate social reports on this issue. Following my challenge, a summary of a survey conducted by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs of environmental reporting by the FTSE 350 was placed in the Library of the House in July 2002.

As far as I am aware, 124 FTSE 350 companies currently produce social and environmental reports.

Cabinet Papers

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to change the 30-year restriction on the disclosure of Cabinet papers; and if he will make a statement. [152956]

The Prime Minister: The Government have done a great deal to increase the openness and transparency of their proceedings. The Freedom of Information Act is a significant step forward that will be implemented from January 2005 and we will continue to keep under review further steps towards greater openness.

EU Enlargement

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with the EU accession countries on the expected number of migrants coming to the UK after enlargement. [154223]

The Prime Minister: The Government continue to be in close contact with EU accession states on this issue.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave to the right hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) at Prime Minister's Questions on 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1405–06.

Headed Notepaper

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Prime Minister what authority members of the Prime Minister's staff have to use 10 Downing street headed paper while employed in his office. [154878]

The Prime Minister: Staff employed in my office use 10 Downing street paper, in the course of their official duties, as it is the office in which they work.

Iraq

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Prime Minister with reference to the information received on 29 August 2002 that some of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction could be deployed within 45 minutes of an order to use them, on what date he published the information that this referred to battlefield weapons. [153009]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Gerald Howarth) on 15 September 2003.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister whether changes were made to the content of the Iraq weapons of mass destruction dossier between the version signed off by John Scarlett on 20 September 2002 and the version sent to the printer for publication; on what day the final version was delivered to the printer; and on what day the printing was done. [153928]

The Prime Minister: John Scarlett set out to Lord Hutton the changes that were made to the dossier and explained how they were made to bring the text in line with underlying intelligence. The dossier was sent to the printers on 20 September. Further manuscript changes were made by Mr. Scarlett and his staff that day, acting under the delegated authority of the Joint Intelligence Committee, and are set out at Appendix 12 of Lord Hutton's report.

Mr. Scarlett made further grammatical changes at the proof-reading stage at the printer and deleted a reference to the Iraqi football team under the sub-heading: "Saddam Hussein's Family" in part 3 of the document.

The document was finally proof-read by the assessment staff and signed-off on 23 September 2002, and it was printed on the same day.

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer to the hon. Member for Croydon, South (Richard Ottaway) of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 772, if he will list the occasions between 1 January 2003 and 1 May 2003 when the 45-minute matter in respect of alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction was raised with him. [154688]

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware, none.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer to the hon. Member for Croydon, South on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 772, when he knew that the 45-minute launch time referred to Iraqi battlefield chemical and biological weapons. [154752]

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Prime Minister (1) pursuant to his statement on 4 February on what date after 18 March 2003 he was first made aware that the 45-minute claim related to battlefield weapons or small calibre weaponry; [154673]

(2) on what date prior to 4 February he had made it clear exactly when he had been made aware of the classes of weapons to which the 45-minute claim referred. [154674]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Members for Montgomeryshire (Lembit Öpik) Croydon, South (Richard Ottaway) and Tonbridge and Malling (Sir John Stanley) on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1345–46W.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Prime Minister when the Government warned the Iraqi regime that the use of chemical or biological weapons would meet with a nuclear response. [154753]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave her on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1346W.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister what information the British Government passed to Dr. Hans Blix to assist in his search for weapons of mass destruction; what the results were of the weapons inspectors' investigations following up information passed on by the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [155218]

The Prime Minister: Since 1991, successive Governments have assisted the work of UN inspectors in Iraq, including Dr. Hans Blix and UNMOVIC. The Government provided information on our understanding of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and their associated programmes, based on all available sources. Dr. Blix acknowledged this himself on 13 January 2003 when he said on the BBC World Service:

> "We have fairly good co-operation both with the Americans and British and other sources of intelligence and we are beginning to make more use of it".

Information passed by the Government would have been incorporated with information obtained by the UN inspectors from their other sources. It is not possible to say what the results were of UN inspectors' investigations based only on information passed by HMG.

Dr. Blix's reports to the UN Security Council do not differentiate between findings resulting from UK information and findings resulting from information from other sources.

Minister for the Disabled

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to appoint a Minister for the Disabled. [154564]

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Garston (Maria Eagle) is the Minister for Disabled People.

Radioactive Waste

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what correspondence he has received from Nirex in respect of the issues raised by the proposed compensation of host communities chosen as locations for radioactive waste management repositories. [154692]

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware, I have received one letter from Nirex on this issue drawing attention to the Nirex report, published in 2002, entitled "Compensation in Radioactive Waste Management: Ethical Issues in the Treatment of Host Communities".

SIS (Staff Counsellor)

Mr. Roy: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement about the Staff Counsellor for the Security and Intelligence Services. [155448]

The Prime Minister: Sir John Chilcot GCB has served as Staff Counsellor for the Security and Intelligence Services (the Security Service, Secret Intelligence Service and GCHQ) since 1 April 1999. He was due to retire from the post on 31 March 2004. On 3 February, however, I appointed Sir John to the Committee to Review Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction and he relinquished his role as Staff Counsellor that day.

I have now appointed John Warne CB, Director-General for Counter-Terrorism, Organised Crime, Drugs and International Affairs at the Home Office until September 2002, as his successor, with effect from 4 February 2004 and he will take on all new cases. Sir John Chilcot will continue to deal with those cases that he was handling prior to 3 February, and is confident that there is no conflict of interest.

Train Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Prime Minister when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [154700]

The Prime Minister: I travel making the most efficient and cost-effective arrangements, and use the train as and when appropriate and taking account of security considerations.

All ministerial travel on official business is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in "Travel by Ministers".

HEALTH

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are in place to ensure that there is no new outbreak of CJD in Britain. [147712]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It has been scientifically established that the strains of agent causing bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) are indistinguishable, and the most plausible explanation, although not yet proven, is that BSE transmitted to humans via contaminated meat or meat products. In 2002, the World Health Organisation published consumer information, which states that the consumption of contaminated meat and other food products from cattle with BSE is presumed to be the cause of vCJD in humans.

The United Kingdom has in place stringent controls to minimise the risk of the BSE agent getting into the food chain. These include a ban on mammalian and other processed animal proteins being fed to farmed livestock; the specified risk material (SRM) controls that prohibit from human consumption those parts of the animal that might harbour BSE; and the over 30 months rule that does not permit most older animals to enter the food chain. The Beef Assurance Scheme does allow a few older animals into the food chain, if reared from grass in beef herds, subject to special rules. All measures currently in place are rigorously enforced, for example by members of the Meat Hygiene Service supervising activity at abattoirs.

The Department of Health has taken a number of measures to reduce the risks of CJD infection arising from one person passing it on to another, in particular through blood and surgery.

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been undertaken to establish whether an increase in sporadic CJD is connected to BSE contaminated meat. [153860]

Miss Melanie Johnson: An increase in deaths in the United Kingdom from sporadic Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) from about 10 per year in 1970 to about 40 a year in the 1990s has been reported. These rates are comparable to those observed elsewhere in the world, including countries free of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). The increased numbers reported probably reflects improved diagnosis, particularly in elderly patients.

Recent examination of the possible causes of the increased rates of sporadic CJD in Switzerland concluded that there was no evidence that the Swiss patients developed the disease as a result of exposure to BSE.

A laboratory study in an animal model published in 2002 (Asante et al 2002. EMBO Journal vol 21) raised the possibility that BSE infection may be linked with disease pathology characteristic of sporadic CJD in humans. Copies are available in the Library. The Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC), the independent, international group of experts that advises the United Kingdom Government on all matters connected with transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, considered this paper in February 2003 and acknowledged that it was plausible but considered that the new work did not provide strong evidence to support the hypothesis.

Food Supplements

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health following the granting of leave by the High Court for a case against the Food Supplements Directive to be taken to the European Court of Justice, if he will press the Commission to attempt to achieve a political agreement that the European Food Safety Authority will only set maximum limits for permitted levels of nutrients in supplements on grounds of safety. [154109]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government awaits the outcome of the reference of the validity of the Food Supplements Directive to the European Court of Justice with interest. In the meantime, the United Kingdom will continue to argue for safety-based European Community regulation of food supplements. The UK Government's position continues to be that maximum limits should be set on the basis of safety and not unnecessarily limited by supposed nutritional need.

Allergies

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his Department's strategy for diagnosis and management of allergies in the National Health Service; what guidance is issued to primary care staff on diagnosis and treatment options; what provision is made for access to allergy specialists; and what support and funding is provided for research into the *(a)* causes and *(b)* treatment of allergies. [154225]

Dr. Ladyman: It is the role of primary care trusts in partnership with local stakeholders to decide what services to provide for their populations, including those with allergies. They are best placed to understand local health care needs and commission services to meet them. The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) published their report, "Allergy—the unmet need: a blueprint for better patient care", on 25 June 2003. We welcome the RCP report and believe it is a useful contribution to the debate on how to improve National Health Service allergy services. The report noted that allergies including asthma, rhinitis, eczema, food allergy and

drug allergy are becoming increasingly common. It calls for improved NHS allergy services across the board and offered useful models about how this could be achieved.

A range of research projects on the epidemiology of allergies have recently been completed or are ongoing. The International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC) was formed in 1991. Phase One measured the prevalence of childhood asthma, hayfever and atopic eczema for international comparisons. Phase Two began in 1998 and involves more intensive studies in a smaller number of countries. The Department of Health funded the UK contribution to Phase Two.

The Food Standards Agency funds research on food allergy and intolerance, with particular emphasis on severe allergies, how they occur and what causes them. A large programme of research on food intolerance and allergy, costing around £1 million a year is ongoing. King's College London is leading a £2.1 million European Commission (EC) funded prospective study of the incidence and prognosis of allergy, allergic disease and low lung function in adults living in Europe. Also, The University of Manchester is leading a £1.2 million EC-funded investigation of the prevalence, pathogenesis, treatment and prevention of sun allergy across Europe. Sun-provoked skin reactions are one of the commonest forms of allergy.

Ambulance Service

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in the procurement of a replacement radio system for the ambulance service; when he anticipates the contract will be awarded; and when he expects the new system to be in operation. [154346]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The current negotiations are continuing and it is expected that a decision to announce the designated supplier of the new digital network and infrastructure is imminent. A designated supplier for a second contract for the provision of the radio handsets, fixed mobiles, ambulance control room equipment and integration will be announced very soon after.

Following Capital Investment Branch (CIB), Her Majesties Treasury (HMT), Office of Government Commerce and appropriate board approvals, it is expected that the contract will be awarded mid to late May 2004.

Following the award of contract, a pilot implementation will be undertaken at an English trust, followed by a full roll out across Great Britain.

The timetable sets out an end date of late 2006–07 for all ambulance services in Great Britain to be fully operative.

Anti-ligature Policies

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on anti-ligature policies for standard NHS environments. [154422]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Following the Chief Medical Officer's report 'An Organisation with a Memory', a Department of Health directive was issued requiring all local mental health services to remove all non-collapsible bed and shower curtain rails in all in-patient settings. This has now been achieved.

The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness made a number of recommendations that included a requirement that all in-patient wards should remove or cover all likely ligature points. The Department of Health supports these recommendations and has published a toolkit to help local mental health services implement them.

Finally, the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) plays a key role in bringing patient safety to a national level, enabling the entire National Health Service to learn from incidents and make itself safer.

Autism

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what cross-departmental work is being carried out by his Department and the Department for Education and Skills in respect of those who have been diagnosed as autistic; and if he will make a statement. [153126]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department of Health, in association with the Department for Education and Skills, published good practice guidance on autistic spectrum disorders in July 2002. The guidance was primarily aimed at schools and local education authorities but was also relevant to health and social services providers.

The Government's new strategy for special educational needs (SEN) "Removing Barriers to Achievement", is jointly signed by Ministers from the Departments for Education and Skills (DfES), Health, and Work and Pensions. It sets out a strategy for improving SEN provision, including work focussed on autistic spectrum disorders. The strategy will complement relevant children's programmes, including the children's national service framework (NSF) and the autism exemplar under the NSF. The Department and the DfES will work closely on the development of the exemplar.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on assisting those who have been diagnosed as autistic; and if he will make a statement. [153127]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government's policy is that appropriate services should be provided for children and adults with autism according to each individual's needs.

Most children with autism will need high quality support from health, education and social services. They should receive this through an integrated system. Our recently published Green Paper "Every Child Matters", sets out proposals to integrate children's services through the development of children's trusts and the appointment of local authority directors of children's services.

We are also developing the children's national service framework (NSF), which will set new national standards for the national health service and social services. Services for disabled children will be a key part of the NSF, which will include care pathways/exemplar

diagrams illustrating optimum approaches to delivering services in a number of different areas. We have already announced that autism will be used as an exemplar.

Children with autistic spectrum disorders are also benefiting from the programmes we are introducing to improve family support services for disabled children. The Quality Protects programme to improve children's social services has made disabled children a priority area. From 2001–02 to 2003–04, £60 million from the children's services special grant has been earmarked for services for disabled children and their families—£15 million in 2001–02 and 2002–03 and £30 million this year. Quality Protects management action plans show that more family support services are being provided, particularly home based respite care and sitting services.

Our White Paper, "Valuing People", directly covers every adult with autism who also has a learning disability. Implementation guidance, issued in August 2001, makes clear that adults with Asperger's Syndrome or higher functioning autism are not precluded from using learning disability services, where appropriate, and may require an assessment of their social functioning and communication skills in order to establish their level of need. By bringing together a wide range of local statutory agencies, Valuing People gives us the scope to improve opportunities and services for people across the autistic spectrum.

People with autism are benefiting from funding of over £250,000, which the Department made through the Section 64 Scheme of Grants to Voluntary Organisations between 1999–2000 and 2002–03. We are currently devoting further funds over three years to the National Autistic Society project, "Independence and Autism: Good Practice for Service Providers". This will support the development of new services to enable adults with autism or Asperger's Syndrome to live independently.

People with autism will also gain, along with others, from the investment we are making to improve standards in health and social care services. In particular, they will benefit from the NHS Plan, the mental health NSF (which covers the mental health needs of adults with autism) and fair access to care services. We will continue to review what more needs to be done for all people affected by autistic spectrum disorders.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were diagnosed as being autistic in *(a)* 1990, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [153128]

Dr. Ladyman: Details of the number of people diagnosed with autism are not available. The Medical Research Council (MRC) published a comprehensive review of autism research in December 2001, which provides an authoritative overview of the current state of knowledge on the prevalence, incidence and causes of autism. The report was commissioned by the Department of Health. It is available on the MRC website at www.mrc.ac.uk/pdf-autism-report.pdf.

The MRC report notes that according to recent reviews, there appears fairly good agreement that autism spectrum disorders affect approximately 60, and more narrowly defined autism 10 to 30, per 10,000 children under eight. The prevalence of autism among adult populations is not known.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much financial support he has given for research into autism in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [153129]

Dr. Ladyman: The Medical Research Council (MRC), a non-departmental public body which receives its grant-in-aid from the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology, is the main public sector body which funds research into autism. The MRC spend on autism since 1998 is shown in the table.

£ millions

	Spend on autism
1998–99	1.04
1999–2000	1.11
2000–01	1.18
2001–02	1.26
2002–03	1.30

The MRC always welcomes high quality applications for support into any aspect of human health and these are judged in open competition with other demands on funding. Awards are made according to their scientific quality and importance to human health.

In February 2002, we allocated a further £2.5 million to the MRC to help it to take forward its programme of work on autism. Between December 2002 and July 2003, the MRC held a series of four seminars to encourage the development of good quality applications for autism research funding. Topics covered in the seminars were gut and the developing child; brain and mind (neuropsychology and neuroimaging); autism in populations and outcome measures for interventions in children and adults. On 11 July 2003 the MRC held the first of their annual forums for autism research, "Breaking barriers, building bridges", in conjunction with the National Autistic Society, to bring together ideas stimulated by the previous four seminars.

The MRC will be taking decisions on the allocation of research project funding for further autism studies in early 2004.

Cancer Survey

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library a copy of the analysis of the National Patient Cancer Survey commissioned by his Department. [153107]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The analysis of the national cancer patient survey is expected to be completed shortly. A copy of the analysis will be placed in the Library then.

Cardiac Treatment (Brighton Hospitals)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what basis decisions are taken on whether persons receiving cardiac treatment at Brighton hospitals have *(a)* their travel expenses, *(b)* the

accommodation costs of spouses or carers and *(c)* the travel expenses of spouses or carers met from public funds. [154874]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department of Health has provided guidance on the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme. Primary Care Trusts are responsible for reimbursing provider units for the payments made under the scheme to all patients who are resident in their districts and eligible. Procedures for processing such claims should be agreed locally. Further information about the scheme can be found at http://www.doh.gov.uk/hospitaltravelcosts/intro.htm

Care Homes

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of availability of care home places in London and the South on the well-being of elderly people. [153998]

Dr. Ladyman: There were 12,200 care homes with 209,000 places in London and the South at 31 March 2001.

Figures for later years have been collected by the National Care Standards Commission but comparable details are not yet available.

It is up to local councils to determine the range of care options, including residential care home places, that are needed to ensure the well being of their local population. This information should then inform their commissioning strategies and decisions.

Care Registrations

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the National Care Standards Commission in processing new registrations. [154610]

Dr. Ladyman: The National Care Standards Commission is working hard to process new registrations as quickly as possible, never losing sight of the need to raise standards in the care sector.

Care Workers

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in England are employed as care workers; and how many vacancies there are for care workers. [153915]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* The number of vacancies for care staff in England is not available centrally.

The estimated whole-time equivalent number of care staff employed by local authorities' social services departments in England as at 30 September 2002 (the latest date for which data are available) was 78,230. This excludes field social workers, central strategic and other administrative and support staff. The number of care staff employed in the private and voluntary sectors is not available centrally.

For too long the work of social care workers in our community has been undervalued and under-rated making recruitment difficult. The Department of Health is determined to give all the assistance it can to tackle this problem. As part of our ongoing action in this area a new National Social Care Recruitment Campaign was launched on 2 February 2004. The purpose of the campaign is to recruit more people to the social care workforce, with a particular emphasis on attracting more people to work with older people. The five week campaign will appear on television and milk cartons and in a range of press titles.

We have been meeting with local authorities and communicating with independent sector employers to maximise the impact of this campaign, so that they can use the interest generated by the campaign to promote and advertise their own social care vacancies to coincide with the campaign period.

The main objective of our social care worker recruitment campaign is to show the depth and variety of work in which social care workers are involved and the many benefits they bring to so many people's lives. The campaign was produced following extensive research with potential and existing social care workers and dialogue with stakeholders.

Childhood Immunisation

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of children did not receive any of the standard childhood immunisations in 2003. [152996]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information about the uptake childhood immunisations is published annually in Department of Health Statistical Bulletins. The latest bulletin, NHS Immunisation Statistics, England: 2002–03, is available in the Library and on the Department's website at www.doh.gov.uk/public/sbQ218.htm.

Consultant Contracts (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on consultant contracts in the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust. [153487]

Miss Melanie Johnson: All national health service trusts in England are now implementing the new contract for medical and dental consultants and are using the new consultant job planning system to ensure that this new investment brings the maximum benefits for patient care and for the quality of consultants' working lives. It is a matter for individual trusts and their consultants locally to agree how best to achieve these objectives.

Contaminated Blood

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the countries from which the NHS purchases plasma and blood products; and in which of these countries there have been cases of *(a)* CJD, *(b)* vCJD and *(c)* BSE. [153861]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Plasma for fractionation into plasma products and fresh frozen plasma for neonates and children born after 1 January 1996 is imported from the United States. There has been one case of variant CJD in the US in a patient who had been resident in the United Kingdom. In December 2003, the US reported one case of BSE. Naturally occurring CJD occurs in one in one million people world-wide.

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the National Blood Transfusion Committee has completed its contingency logistics plan on how to deal with possible blood shortages resulting from measures taken to reduce the risk of transmission of vCJD by blood transfusion; and when it will be published. [153862]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The National Blood Transfusion Committee (NBTC) has been developing contingency plans relating to blood shortages in general and not specifically to shortages resulting from any measures taken to reduce the possible transmission of vCJD through blood transfusion. The NBTC will distribute plans to hospitals later this year.

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to ban foreign nationals who have received blood in countries with confirmed cases of BSE from donating blood in the UK. [153863]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are no plans to ban foreign nationals from donating blood. The Government Expert Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Blood and Tissue for Transplantation continues to keep this issue under review.

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his statement on developments in variant CJD of 17 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 1571–85, what steps he is taking to encourage the NHS to move towards the greater use of alternatives to blood in non-emergency medical cases. [153878]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Chief Medical Officer's national blood transfusion committee meets in March 2004 and will consider additional proposals for supporting hospitals in the implementation of the "Better Blood Transfusion: Appropriate Use of Blood" initiative. The Department will consider the advice of the committee in deciding the best way forward.

Delayed Discharges (Essex)

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total amount of fines imposed on Essex Social Services Department in January was as a result of delayed discharge of patients from hospital. [154194]

Dr. Ladyman: Figures for legal liability for delayed discharges for individual councils are not held centrally. The hon. Member might wish to contact Essex Social Services direct for this information.

Dietary Strategy

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's strategy is for reducing *(a)* sugar levels in food and *(b)* the prevalence of people having excess sugar in their diet. [153117]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There is a NHS Plan (2000) commitment to work with industry to improve the overall balance of the diet, including salt, fat and sugar in food. The Department of Health and the Food Standards Agency are in discussions with the food industry and retailers on reducing the level of salt in processed foods and work on added sugars and fat will follow through 2004.

Wider initiatives will also have an impact on population average intakes of sugars, including the five-a-day programme, action in schools and the development of the food and health action plan.

The food and health action plan will address diet and nutrition at all stages of the life course and will build on existing work. It will therefore be key for addressing intakes of added sugars, as well as fat and salt.

Domiciliary Care

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what actions the National Care Standards Commission has taken to publicise the need for providers of domiciliary care to be registered with them; [154608]

(2) what guidance has been issued by the National Care Standards Commission concerning the types of domiciliary care which are subject to regulation. [154609]

Dr. Ladyman: The requirement for domiciliary care providers to register with the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) is set out in the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002 (as amended). Primary guidance on the regulation of the domiciliary care sector is set by the Government in regulations and national minimum standards.

The NCSC has undertaken a number of initiatives to publicise guidance on the registration requirements. For example, the NCSC's website www.carestandards.org.uk sets out the requirements for providers to register and gives details of how to obtain hard copies of relevant information. This section also specifically refers to the Domiciliary Care Regulations and the National Minimum Standards governing the sector as well as the regulations concerning fees and frequency of inspections. In addition, application packs for registration as a domiciliary care agency also include guidance on such services subject to regulation.

The NCSC has also arranged meetings and workshops with providers at a national and local level to assist in the registration process and to explain the requirements of regulation. A provider reference group comprising industry leaders has also been established in order to cascade information specifically to the domiciliary care sector. Articles have also been published in the trade press, such as "Caring Times" and "Community Care".

The NCSC continues to work with providers to give guidance throughout the registration process and afterwards.

Down's Syndrome

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding his Department provided in 2003–04 for people affected by Down's Syndrome, including research into Down's Syndrome, broken down by *(a)* budget heading and *(b)* area of research. [153688]

Dr. Ladyman: Over £3 billion a year is spent on health and social services for people with learning disabilities including those with Down's Syndrome. People with

Down's Syndrome also use mainstream health and social services and benefit from increased expenditure on those services.

People with Down's Syndrome and their family carers will also benefit from our proposals for improving services for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers set out in the White Paper, "Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century" (Cm 5086), published in March 2001. "Valuing People" introduced an implementation support fund of £2.3 million a year from April 2001 and the Learning Disability Development Fund, comprising £23.1 million revenue and £20 million capital in 2003–04.

Families of children with Down's Syndrome have also benefited from Government investment in programmes to support disabled children:

The Quality Protects programme;

Yearly rises in the carer's grant;

Direct payments—one of the key aims is to give families greater choice and flexibility in how they receive services, including short term breaks;

As part of the development of national service framework for children, the Government are considering how best to support the particular needs of families with disabled children.

The Down's Syndrome Association has been awarded a grant of £28,000 for a two year project, "Planning for a Healthy Life".

The main agency through which the Government support medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body that receives its grant-in-aid from the Office of Science and Technology. The MRC supports basic and applied research into Down's Syndrome and spent an estimated £0.4 million in 2002–03 on Down's Syndrome research.

The Department funds research to support policy and the delivery of effective practice in the national health service. At present, we are funding a £2 million learning disability research initiative. This is addressing a range of issues, for example:

support for school leavers with learning disabilities;

reproductive health care needs of women with learning disabilities;

measures of core competencies and job performance in residential support staff working with people with learning disabilities.

The Department is currently meeting the service costs of a clinical trial of the effects of antioxidants and folinic acid supplementation on the mental development, growth and health of children with Down's Syndrome. The trial is a joint initiative between the Institutes of Child Health in London and Birmingham, the Down's Syndrome Association, the Down's Syndrome Research Foundation and the Research Unit of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

EU Directives

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of *(a)* EU Directive 2001/20/EC and *(b)* the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2003 on cancer research in the UK. [152325]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Member States were required to transpose the provisions of the Clinical Trials Directive (2001/20/EC) into national legislation by 1 May 2003, and to implement the Directive by 1 May 2004. The Government have consulted widely on these important new Regulations and undertaken to take account of all points of view, including the views of those involved in cancer research before finalising the implementing Regulations. One of the main aims of Directive 2001/20/EC is to provide a safe environment for participants in clinical trials while not inhibiting the development of essential new medicines for human use. Implementation of an efficient regulatory system will help new effective medicines for diseases such as cancer to reach the market more quickly whilst protecting subjects enrolling into clinical trials.

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on *(a)* EU Directive 2001/20/EC and *(b)* the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2003. [152327]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Clinical Trials Directive (2001/20/EC) was agreed by Member States in 2001. Member States were required to transpose the Directive into national legislation by 1 May 2003 and to implement the provisions of the Directive by 1 May 2004. Transposition of the Directive was delayed in the United Kingdom because of concerns expressed by the academic research community about the possible impact on academic research and because of the European Commission's delay in finalising two Commission Directives, one on Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and one on Good Clinical Practice (GCP). The GMP Directive was agreed by Member States in 2003. We are committed to implementing the Clinical Trials Directive by 1 May 2004. We are currently finalising our implementing Regulations.

Gamma Cameras

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS trusts have gamma cameras; and what the date of their acquisition was in each case. [154007]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally by the Department.

GP Drug Training

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting list is for general practitioner training in substance misuse treatment. [153990]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* General practitioners receive training in substance misuse treatment through the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Certificate in the Management of Drug Misuse.

All GPs who applied for a place on the course this year were allocated a place and accompanying funding.

The Department has already allocated £3 million to the RCGP to support this training and recently approved a further £693,000 available to cover the costs of courses operating between April 2004 and March 2005.

Health Protection Agency

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of the European Commission's REACH chemical regulations on the work of the Health Protection Agency at Porton Down; and what representations he has made to the Commission. [153396]

Miss Melanie Johnson: REACH will not have any direct impact on the work of the Health Protection Agency (HPA) as it is not a regulatory agency. However, a key objective of the new proposals is to ensure that more information is available on the health effects of chemicals of most concern and this should, in due course, facilitate the work of the chemical hazards and poisons division of the HPA.

Heroin Addicts

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the success rates in *(a)* France and *(b)* Sweden in treating heroin addiction; and what the success rate is in the UK. [153988]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* Departmental officials are not aware of any studies which have been undertaken to review the effectiveness of treatment for heroin addiction in Sweden or France.

Hospice Funding

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the funds he announced on 26 December 2003 to improve care for the dying will be allocated; and how much will be made available to hospices. [153225]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Command Paper arising from the recent consultation on Choice, Responsiveness and Equity in the NHS, "Building on the Best", stated that, building on work already in hand to develop specialist palliative care services for cancer, we will be working in partnership with voluntary and statutory bodies to build on current initiatives and extend them over time to all adult patients nearing the end of life. The project will, therefore, benefit all patients, including those with cancer. The additional £12 million (over three years) funding to support this initiative announced by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, on 26 December will specifically help support implementation of the Macmillan Gold Standards Framework, South Lancashire and Cumbria Cancer Network's Preferred Place of Care and Marie Curie's Liverpool Care Pathway for the Dying.

Arrangements for the allocation of the £12 million is still being finalised. The Department, through the national clinical director, is working closely with key stakeholders on how this project will be handled.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much money has been given through the NHS to *(a)* Derian House Hospice and *(b)* St Catherine's Hospice in each of the last five years; [153381]

(2) how much money has been given to Derian House Children's Hospice since 2001 by each primary care trust. [153491]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not available in the format requested. However, during 2002–03, the Chorley & South Ribble Primary Care Trust provided recurrent funding of £427,000 to St. Catherine's Hospice and £11,000 to Derian House Hospice.

Financial returns in previous years do not separately identify payments made to hospices.

Illegal Meat

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial support the Food Standards Agency is providing to local authorities to aid them in the *(a)* detection and *(b)* prosecution of traders in illegal meat. [153265]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) can offer assistance to local authorities (LAs) in the form of access to thirty members of the illegal meat task force and seven investigating officers to assist them in their enquiries into the illegal meat trade.

These officers have received comprehensive training by the FSA on investigative procedures and techniques, so that they can then advise LAs as to the most appropriate way they can proceed with their investigations.

The task force members are regionally based in LAs and each will initially provide up to ten working days per year in their role as adviser. The costs of their services will be borne directly by the FSA.

LAs may also apply to the FSA for financial assistance towards their work of detecting and prosecuting traders in illegal meat.

The FSA has allocated an initial annual sum of £200,000 to assist LAs in this area of work.

Learning Disabilities

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on health provision for *(a)* children and *(b)* adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities. [153784]

Dr. Ladyman: Both children and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities have the same right of access to national health service treatment as everyone else. Our White Paper, "Valuing People—a New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century" (Cm 5086, paragraph 8.33), recognises that people with severe and profound learning disabilities often have other associated health problems such as physical disabilities, sensory impairments and epilepsy.

The White Paper says that specialist learning disability staff have important roles in enhancing the competence of other local services to support service users in their usual surroundings and in enabling them

to access mainstream services. Good practice guidance on "Valuing People" proposals for health action plans and health facilitation devotes a full chapter to people with sensory impairments and/or profound and multiple learning disabilities.

"Valuing People" made people with severe and profound learning disabilities a priority for Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) capital investment. When we wrote to chief executives of primary care trusts in February 2004, we asked them to take account of the needs of people with high support needs when deciding how best to use their 2004–05 LDDF revenue allocations.

We are also developing the children's national service framework (NSF), which will set new national standards for the NHS and social services. Services for disabled children will be a key part of the NSF, which will include care pathways/exemplar diagrams illustrating optimum approaches to delivering services in a number of different areas.

Mental Health (Suicide)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what standards on *(a)* furniture and *(b)* accessories the Government sets for those caring for mental health patients in an effort to reduce the risk of suicide; and whose responsibility it is to ensure that these standards are met; [154416]

(2) what standards are applied to the building of mental health institutions in order to lower the risk of patient suicides. [154421]

Ms Rosie Winterton: NHS Estates publishes guidance for psychiatric accommodation in the form of hospital building notes (HBNs) and design guides (DCs). NHS Estates also provide technical guidance to supplement HBNs and DCs covering individual elements of buildings such as doors, windows etc.

Other guidance includes "Psychiatric intensive care units—policy guidance and standards" published by the Department of Health.

Guidance was also issued in September 2000 to eliminate the possibility of suicides from cubicle curtain tracks, window curtain tracks and shower rails by replacing the ligature points with low weight release systems. This work was completed by April 2002. Attention was also drawn to many other ligature points which should also be removed including wardrobe rails, door closers, rigid fixed coat hooks, door handles, window mechanisms and radiators.

It is the responsibility of the trust and their professional advisors to satisfy themselves that all measures possible have been taken to eliminate the risk of self-harm by a patient.

"The Architectural Healthcare Environment and its Effects on Patient Health Outcomes" an NHS Estates funded research project undertaken by Sheffield University, includes standards which contribute to a reduction in the risk of suicide.

The standards being used in newly designed psychiatric facilities are providing a very high standard of design quality with good space standards, plenty of natural light and ventilation, privacy and dignity for the patients and access to a range of therapeutic facilities and external spaces.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the Government's policy is on reducing the risks of suicide in mental health hospitals. [154417]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England has identified those in touch with mental health services as a group at high risk of suicide. The strategy sets out a number of actions mental health services need to take to reduce the risk of suicides within this high risk group. The first annual report of the suicide prevention programme sets out progress made so far and further action that needs to be taken in the medium and longer term. A copy of the report is available in the Library.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to what *(a)* precedent cases and *(b)* expert knowledge (i) the Government and (ii) relevant bodies refer when seeking to reduce the risks of suicide in mental health hospitals. [154419]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) funds the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness to ensure that everyone involved in mental health services learns and implements lessons from the factors associated with serious incidents. The inquiry team published Safety First: Five Year Report in 2001. The key findings and recommendations outlined in this report also helped to develop the national suicide prevention strategy. The National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) has developed a toolkit to help mental health services implement the report's recommendations.

In addition, the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) plays a key role in bringing patient safety to a national level, enabling the entire National Health Service to learn from incidents and make itself safer and more stress free for patients.

Finally, Standard 7 of the national service framework for mental health requires local health and social care communities to develop local systems for suicide audit to learn lessons and take any necessary action.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the links between suicide in mental health institutions and high drug abuse and dependency rates. [154420]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Safety First, the five year report of the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness, highlighted substance abuse as a risk factor in incidents of suicide by people under the care of mental health services and set out recommendations for local services based on these findings. These included local strategies for dual diagnosis covering training on the management of substance misuse, joint working with substance misuse services, and staff with specific responsibility to develop the local service.

Methadone

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of methadone

prescriptions under the average dosage recommended by the National Treatment Agency which were issued in the last year for which figures are available. [153989]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The Department does not hold any data on the number of methadone prescriptions under the average dosage recommended by the National Treatment Agency.

Methadone is issued for a number of different prescribing regimes including detoxification, reduction, and maintenance regimes. Prescribing data currently available does not differentiate between these regimes.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will visit Derian House Children's Hospice in Chorley. [153489]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are no current plans by Ministers to undertake a visit to Derian House.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* work force implications of National Institute for Clinical Excellence clinical guidance for multiple sclerosis specialist services. [154004]

Dr. Ladyman: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published its clinical guideline on the clinical management of multiple sclerosis (MS) in primary care in November 2003. The guideline contains information on service provision which will be invaluable to clinicians and organisations providing and managing MS services. The guideline will help us to model service provision and workforce needs.

National Care Standards Commission

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of the National Care Standards Commission has been in each year since its creation. [154464]

Dr. Ladyman: Revenue expenditure for the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) in the year 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 was £119.446 million. The budget figure for 2003–04 is £129.949 million.

Information for the full financial year 2003–04 is not yet available. This will be contained in the NCSC's 2003–04 Annual Report and Accounts to be published and laid before Parliament later this year.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what income has been raised by the National Care Standards Commission in each year since its creation. [154465]

Dr. Ladyman: The income raised by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) in the year 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 was £32.545 million. The budget figure for 2003–04 is £36.718 million.

Information for the full financial year 2003–04 is not yet available. This will be contained in the NCSC's 2003–2004 Annual Report and Accounts to be published and laid before Parliament later this year.

NHS Beds

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS *(a)* general and *(b)* acute hospital beds there were in (i) Chorley and (ii) Preston in each of the last three years. [153849]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the number of general and acute beds is collected annually from each national health service trust and primary care trust. Information is not available for geographical areas.

The average daily number of available general and acute beds, by NHS trust, is shown in the table.

	Name	*General and acute (available)*	*Acute (available)*	*Geriatric (available)*
2000–01	Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust	320	304	16
2000–01	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	709	590	119
2001–02	Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust/Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	1,066	903	163
2002–03	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	1,073	929	144

Source:
Department of Health form KH03. Published 11 September 2003.

NHS Trust Documents

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on making available to hon. Members documents originating in NHS trusts; and what criteria he uses in deciding which of these documents may be placed in the Library when an hon. Member makes a request for them. [146621]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 8 January 2004]:* The Department would generally make available information that it collects and retains, and as such would place this information in the Library, subject to any requirement for confidentiality. The Department would not generally seek to obtain copies of documents or information which it did not already hold. This approach is in line with the Open Government Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, and is consistent with the relationship between the Department and National Health Service organisations following the "Shifting the Balance of Power" initiative.

Operation Telic

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many service men and women served in Operation Telic. [147745]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

Until 1 May, when major combat operations ceased, about 45,000 personnel were deployed to the Gulf region. Since then numbers have reduced to their current level, which fluctuates between 10,000 and 11,000.

Parliamentary Questions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will answer the *(a)* Questions with reference numbers 144997, 144998, 145041, 145043, 145046 and 145055 tabled by the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham on 15 December 2003 and *(b)* Questions with reference numbers 144139, 144140, 144141, 144145 and 144148 tabled by the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham on 10 December 2003. [151035]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The following Parliamentary Questions were transferred to the Home Office, 144997 and 144998. My hon. Friend, the Minister of State at the Home Office (Beverley Hughes) replied to 144998 on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1064W.

The remaining Parliamentary Questions have now been responded to, and information relating to their responses is shown in the table.

PQ	*Date answered*
145041	3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 821W
145043	6 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1131W
145046	2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 687W
145055	28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 400W
144139	26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 184–85W
144140	26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 184–85W
144141	26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 184–85W
144145	4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 961W
144148	27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 326W

Public Health Skills Audit

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 7 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 396W, on public health skills audit, what steps *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies of his Department have taken in response to the findings of the 2001 audit. [153148]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The public health skills audit has led to a number of developments, including additional training programmes for a range of public health specialist and practitioners, particularly those from non-medical backgrounds, the establishment of the voluntary register for public health specialists, an on-line audit tool and national standards for public health specialists and practitioners.

Public Health White Paper

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish a white paper on public health; and if he will make a statement. [153689]

Miss Melanie Johnson: On 3 February, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, announced that the Department would engage in a wide-ranging consultation process on how best to improve and promote the nation's health.

We intend to follow this with a White Paper later this year.

Pulmonary Hypertension

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the susceptibility of different *(a)* gender and *(b)* age groups to pulmonary hypertension; [154296]

(2) what assessment he has made of the recent increase in the number of patients with pulmonary hypertension. [154297]

Dr. Ladyman: Pulmonary hypertension has a variety of causes and we have not made an assessment regarding the occurrence of the condition amongst different gender and age groups.

We have no reason to believe that the true incidence of pulmonary hypertension is increasing. A full-scale research study would be needed to establish whether or not there is a true increase.

R and D

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to whom his Department distributes expenditure on research and development; how many staff are employed as a result; and how many research establishments of *(a)* the Department and *(b)* its agencies there are in each region of England. [154356]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Research and development expenditure is distributed to a range of bodies and principally through allocations to organisations across the national health service in England. Figures for staff directly employed as a result of such funding are not available. Research is carried out by a number of the Department's arm's length bodies, principally the Health Protection Agency, the National Radiological Protection Board and the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control.

Renal Services (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on renal services in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [153493]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Specialist renal services for patients across Cumbria and Lancashire are based at the Royal Preston Hospital. This is complemented by a number of satellite units, which are located at the Accrington Victoria Hospital, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Chorley and South Ribble District General Hospital, and the Westmorland General Hospital. Patients with blood-borne viruses will be dialysed in Manchester.

Restructuring/Change Programme

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total reduction in numbers of departmental staff will be under the Change Programme. [153698]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department will reduce by 1,400 posts to 2,245.

Rural Health Care

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to address the health needs of elderly people in rural areas. [154907]

Dr. Ladyman: In March 2003, the Department provided information to the Countryside Agency on 'rural proofing' health and social care services, including those for older people. This information was included in the agency's report, "Rural Proofing", in 2002–03. The report can be viewed at www.countryside.gov.uk/publications.

School Fruit

Mrs Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress is being made towards giving every child aged four to six a free piece of fruit each school day; [152803]

(2) what discussions he has had with other departments and local education authorities in England to promote the National School Fruit Scheme; [152804]

(3) how many local education authorities in England are participating in the National School Fruit Scheme. [152805]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Over a million children aged four to six are already receiving a free piece of fruit every school day. 96 per cent., of local education authority (LEA) infant, primary and special schools with children aged four to six in four regions—the West and East Midlands, London and the North West—have joined the scheme. By the end of 2004, children in all such LEA schools in England will be entitled to receive free fruit—over 2.2 million children.

The Department of Health has worked with the Department for Education and Skills and other Government Departments, including the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to develop the scheme. National School Fruit Scheme regional and area co-ordinators have been working with LEAs in each region in which the scheme has been rolled out.

Eighty Seven LEAs are participating on the scheme.

Sustainable Development

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of his Department's Sustainable Development Strategy over the last two years. [150210]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department's strategy on sustainable development and the environment is in line with the Government's overall sustainable development strategy, in which health ("expected healthy years of life") is one of the 15 key headline indicators.

The Department's strategy has provided the impetus for increasing awareness of the need to take sustainable development considerations into account as part of all of the Department's activities. It recognises the key importance of reducing inequalities in health. The main strategy is supported also by a separate operational environment strategy and by the development of the Department's Environmental Management System. These have helped the Department meet the requirements of the Government's "Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate".

The NHS Estates Agency (NHSE) and the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA)—both Executive Agencies of the Department—have their own sustainable development/environmental strategies in place. The NHSE has issued a "New Environmental Strategy for the NHS and Sustainable Development in the NHS" as guidance for the NHS. NHS PASA has a sustainable development policy which it published in February 2003. This policy describes the framework within which NHS PASA will conduct its activities in order to contribute towards global pursuits of sustainable development.

Further information can be found on the Department's website at www.doh.gov.uk/sustainabledevelopment. Details of the sustainable development activities of the agencies can be found at www.nhsestates.gov.uk (for the NHSE) and www.pasa.nhs.uk/sustainabledevelopment (for the NHS PASA).

Toxic Chemicals

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been conducted by his Department into the accumulation of toxic chemicals in humans. [153080]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department is currently co-funding a project at the University of Leeds to explore methods for the collection, storage and management of a national archive of human milk samples. The other funders are the Food Standards Agency (which leads), the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Health and Safety Executive. A human milk archive would provide a resource, which could be used to monitor levels of cumulative chemicals. This, in turn, will inform decisions by regulatory bodies on the need for strategies to reduce the use of cumulative chemicals and their levels in the environment and in food. The report of the project is expected later this year.

Tuberculosis

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what departmental guidance he has issued on the control of tuberculosis at *(a)* ports and *(b)* airports; [153359]

(2) what procedures for the screening of immigrants for pulmonary tuberculosis *(a)* are carried out and *(b)* he plans to implement. [153360]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Immigration officers are able to refer prospective entrants to the United Kingdom to medical inspectors at UK ports and airports. Long-standing policy is that any person subject to immigration control who:

mentions health or medical treatment as a reason for coming to the United Kingdom, or appears unwell; or

is seeking leave to enter the United Kingdom for six months or more and is at high risk of having been exposed to tuberculosis (TB)

should be referred by the immigration officer to a medical inspector at the port or airport.

There are three x-ray machines at Heathrow airport and one at Gatwick airport, so that chest x-rays for TB can be carried out there on people referred for medical inspection who are likely to be at high risk of having been exposed to TB. Medical inspectors working at ports of entry are asked to pass details of those that they have examined to the primary care trust (PCT) at their destination address. This enables PCTs to follow up any cases of infection which have been identified, and arrange any necessary testing which it is not possible to undertake at the ports. Anyone who is lawfully in the UK and has TB is able to receive free treatment for it from the national health service.

The Cabinet Office is currently co-ordinating work between relevant Government Departments, including the Department of Health, to review imported infections and immigration. The review aims to establish the facts about the-impact of immigration on public health and NHS expenditure, consider all relevant issues including health screening and propose solutions should action be required. No decisions have been taken yet.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on levels of immunity to tuberculosis in London. [153361]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Uptake levels of BCG vaccine can be obtained from Statistical Bulletin 2003/16, "NHS Immunisation Statistics, England 2003", which is available in the Library and on the Department's web-site at www.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0316.htm.

Variant CJD

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many recipients of *(a)* blood and *(b)* blood products derived from donors who subsequently were confirmed to have variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease have been identified. [145452]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There have been 15 recipients of blood in England and Wales from donors who were later confirmed as having variant Creutzfeldt Jacob disease (vCJD). Information on the numbers of patients who may have received blood products from donors diagnosed with vCJD is currently not known. The Chief Medical Officer will oversee any further work and investigation that is required.

Waiting Times (Breast Cancer)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what statistics are collated on waiting times for breast cancer patients other than the two-week target for general practitioner urgent referral to first outpatient appointment. [152928]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* The primary purpose of the NHS Cancer Plan is to save more lives. Reducing waiting times is key to achieving this. For breast cancer, waiting times data is collected and published on: the two week outpatient waiting time standard from urgent general practitioner referral to seeing a specialist; and since 2001, a milestone of a maximum one month from diagnosis with breast cancer to first definitive treatment. From 2002 data has been collected on the further milestone of a maximum two months from urgent general practitioner referral with suspected breast cancer to first definitive treatment. We have made significant progress on both counts. Data on achievement of NHS Cancer Plan waiting times targets are published on the Department's website for strategic health authorities and trusts, at http://www.dh.gov.uk/cancerwaits

Working Time Directive

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the implications of the Working Time Directive for the work of general practitioners in the Chorley South Ribble Primary Care Trust. [153488]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Working Time Directive (WTD) is an integral part of modernising and improving services at all levels. The majority of general practitioners are self employed and as such are not covered by the WTD.

Of the smaller number of GPs, those who are fully qualified have been covered by the WTD since 1998, along with other national health service staff. It is the responsibility of primary care trusts to monitor the hours worked by those GPs in their employment. This information is not collected centrally.

Yellow/red Cards

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* yellow and *(b)* red cards have been issued by (i) Barnsley hospital, (ii) Doncaster Royal infirmary and (iii) all south-Yorkshire hospitals in each of the last three years. [153717]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Criminal Justice Boards

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to include representatives of *(a)* magistrates' and *(b)* justices' clerks on criminal justice boards. [151775]

Paul Goggins: Both the magistracy and the justices' clerks are included in the consultative machinery that each local criminal justice board has set up. There are no plans, however, to include them in the 'core' membership of the boards.

Speed Cameras

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money was raised in fines from speed cameras in the Humberside area in the last three years. [154167]

Caroline Flint: Information on the revenue raised from speed offences detected by camera is not available.

However the table shows, for the Humberside police force area, the number of fixed penalties ordered to be paid and the number of court fines for such offences in the calendar years 1999 to 2001 (latest available).

Information for 2002 will be available in the spring.

Not all fines and fixed penalties will have been paid.

Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for speeding offences detected by cameras[1,2] in the Humberside police force area, 1999–2001

	Fixed penalties		Court proceedings[3]		
	Number of tickets[4]	Estimated revenue (£)[5]	Number of fines	Total amount of fine (£)	Average fine
1999	7,400	296,200	240	22,600	96
2000	15,700	680,500	27	2,600	97
2001[6]	13,600	816,200	15	3,150	210

[1] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[2] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999.
[3] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.
[4] Paid, i.e. no further action.
[5] Estimate based on £40 fixed penalty charge to October 2000. From November 2000 the penalty was raised to £60.
[6] A single month's shortfall was found for court proceedings summary motoring offences within Humberside police force in 2001.
Note:
Figures have been rounded.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money was raised in fines from speed cameras in the last year for which records are available in *(a)* West Sussex and *(b)* the East Worthing and Shoreham constituency. [154399]

Caroline Flint: Information on the revenue raised from speed offences detected by camera is not available.

Available information on the number of fixed penalties and court fines ordered to be paid within the Sussex police force area for the offence of "speeding detected by camera" in 2001 is shown in the table. It is not possible from the data collected centrally to identify the County of West Sussex and the constituency of East Worthing and Shoreham within the geographical area of the Sussex police force.

Information for 2002 will be available in the spring.

Not all fines and fixed penalties will have been paid.

Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for speeding offences detected by cameras[1] in the Sussex police force area, 2001

	Fixed penalties		Court proceedings[2]		
	Number of tickets[3]	Estimated revenue (£)[4]	Number of fines	Total amount of fine (£)	Average fine
2001	10,900	655,100	720	57,500	80

[1] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[2] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.
[3] Paid, i.e. no further action.
[4] 'Estimate' based on £60 penalty charge.
Note:
Figures have been rounded.

Airwave

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the Airwave service to be fully operational within Gwent police force. [154349]

Ms Blears: Gwent is in the process of migrating to full operational use on a division-by-division basis. It is expected that the entire force will be using Airwave by mid-June 2004.

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Airwave service will be available on a national basis. [154350]

Ms Blears: The Airwave system will be available to all forces in England, Wales and Scotland by June 2005. It is already available to 31 forces in England and Wales.

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he expects the operational benefits to the police of the investment in the Airwave services will be; and if he will make a statement. [154351]

Ms Blears: Airwave is not simply a replacement for existing police radio systems. In addition to much improved coverage and clearer, more reliable signals there are additional features that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the police service

Using Airwave, all police officers and police staff will be on the same system, with seamless communications nationally.

Airwave provides higher capacity than is presently available—allowing, for example, the many users attending a major incident to talk at the same time without overloading the system. Airwave also allows for flexible talk-groups, letting officers develop new ways of working together.

All Airwave transmissions are encrypted, allowing officers to pass information without criminals being able to eavesdrop.

Airwave handsets have an emergency button to summon help—improving the safety of both police officers and the public. Airwave also allows simultaneous transmission of voice and data, so that

police officers will be able to use their radios to connect to facilities such as the Police National Computer and to file reports without the need to return to their station.

Bribery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what occasions assets relating to bribery of a foreign public official have been confiscated under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; and what amounts were confiscated in each case. [151519]

Caroline Flint: I understand that the Crown Prosecution Service does not keep records of the nationality of persons who are subject to a confiscation order under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and that to obtain this information would involve disproportionate cost. I also understand that Her Majesty's Customs and Excise have obtained three confiscation orders under the Act, none of which relates to the bribery of a foreign public official.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* allegations and *(b)* reports of bribery of a foreign public official by a UK company or individual have been forwarded to (i) the National Criminal Intelligence Service and (ii) the Metropolitan Police from the Fraud Section of the Department of Justice in the US since 1997; and on what dates they were received. [151522]

Caroline Flint: The National Criminal Intelligence Service holds no records of having received from the Fraud Section of the Department of Justice in the US, any allegations or reports of bribery of a foreign public official by a UK company or individual.

The Metropolitan Police system does not enable reports of this nature to be identified separately.

Camp Hill Prison

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the visits room at Camp Hill prison will be refurbished. [153737]

Paul Goggins: Work to improve the visiting facilities at Camp Hill prison is continuing. A painting programme has begun and the heating system has been upgraded.

Carter Report

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what impact he expects the implementation of the report by Patrick Carter, "Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime", will have on the numbers of prisoners remanded in custody. [153147]

Paul Goggins: These issues are currently being considered by the National Offender Management Service Implementation Team.

Consultation

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those individuals and organisations *(a)* to whom (i) his Department, (ii) its executive agencies and (iii) the non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultations (A) Safety and Justice: the Government's proposals on domestic violence and (B) Funding community groups: a consultation document issued by the Government's Active Community Unit on behalf of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Resourcing Community Capacity Building, and *(b)* from whom each received a response in each case. [151654]

Fiona Mactaggart: Government are committed to ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are identified and involved in consultation exercises. Our records show that paper or electronic copies of "Safety and Justice" were sent to the following organisations:

Action for Prisoners' Families
Age Concern
Al Khoei Foundation
Alcohol Concern
Area Child Protection Committees
Asian Family Counselling
Association of Chief Police Officers
Association of Directors for Social Services
Association of District Judges
Association of Magisterial Officers
Association of Police Authorities
Audit Commission
Baha'i Community of the UK
Baptist Union of Great Britain
Bar Council
Barnardo's
Big Issue Foundation
Black Association of Women Step Out
Black Community Development Project
Board of Deputies of British Jews
British Association for Accident and Emergency Medicine
British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
British Association of Social Workers
British Association of Women Police
British Humanist Association
British Medical Association
British Youth Council
Buddhist Society
Burton, Dr. Mandy
Cardiff Women's Safety Unit
Centre for Policy Studies
Chairs of Probation Boards
Charity Commission
Chief Constables
Chief Probation Officers
Childline
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
Children's Society
Chinese Information Advice Service
Christian Scientists
Church of England General Synod
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Commission for Racial Equality
Community and District Nurses Association
Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association
Confederation of British Industry

Council of Christians and Jews
Council of Churches for Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Council of Circuit Judges
Council of Oriental Orthodox Churches
Courts Service of Northern Ireland
Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and, through them, local domestic violence projects
Crime Concern
Crime Reduction Initiatives Head Office
Crisis
Crown Court Resident Judges
Crown Prosecution Service
Department of Health undertook to inform the Chief Executive of every NHS Trust and Primary Care Trust about "Safety and Justice"
Directors and Home Office Directors of the Government Offices for England
Disability Rights Commission
Domestic Violence Intervention Project
Employers' Forum on Age
Employers' Forum on Disability
Equal Opportunities Commission
Escape Family Support
Ethnic Minorities Advice Bureau
Faculty of Health and Social Care, University of West England
Families Need Fathers
Family Rights Group
Family Welfare Association
Fathers Direct
Fawcett Society
Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism
Free Church Federal Council
General Medical Council
General Teaching Council
Greater London Domestic Violence Project
Halt Domestic Violence
Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid
Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
Her Majesty's Prison Service
Hindu Council of the United Kingdom
Homeless Link
House of Commons and House of Lords Vote Office and Library
Housing Corporation
Howard League
Imkaan
Immigration and Nationality Directorate
Inner Cities Religious Council
Institute for Public Policy Research
Institute of Jainology
Institute of Legal Executives
Inter Faith Network for the UK
Islamic Cultural Centre and the London Central Mosque Trust Ltd.
Jehovah's Witnesses
Justice
Justice Department, Scotland
Justices' Chief Executives
Justices' Clerks' Society
Kelly, Professor Liz
Kidscape
Law Society
Leeds Inter-Agency Project/Leeds Crisis Centre
Legal Services Commission
Lesbian and Gay Police Association
Liberty
Lilith Project
Local Government Association
Lord Chancellor's Domestic Violence Advisory Group
Lord Chief Justice
Lucy Faithful Foundation
Magistrates' Association
Mankind Initiative
Marriage Care
Mencap (England)
Mencap (Wales)
Methodist Church
Metropolitan Police Service Black Police Association
Mothers' Union
Muslim Council of Britain
NACRO
NACRO Cymru
National Assembly of Wales
National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux
National Association of Head Teachers
National Children's Bureau
National College for Schools Leadership
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Council of Hindu Temples
National Council of Women of Great Britain
National Domestic Violence Health Practitioners Forum
National Domestic Violence Health Research Forum
National Family and Parenting Institute
National Housing Federation
National Probation Directorate
National Secular Society
NCH
Neighbourhood Watch
Network of Sikh Organisations
Newspaper Society
North Surrey Domestic Violence Forum
Northern Ireland Women's Aid
NSPCC
Nursing and Midwifery Council
Parentline Plus
Parole Board
Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group
Penal Affairs Consortium
Police Authorities
Police Federation
Police Superintendents' Association
President of the Family Division
Presiding Judges
Rainbow Forum
Rape Crisis Federation

Rastafarian Society
Refuge
Refugee Council
Relate
Religious Society of Friends
Respect
Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal College of Midwives
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
Royal College of Physicians
Royal College of Psychiatrists
Sahileya
Save the Children
Scottish Women's Aid
Senior District Judge
Sentencing Guidelines Council
Seventh Day Adventist Church
Shakti Women's Aid
Sheffield Combined Court Centre
Shelter
Sikh Cultural Centre of Great Britain
Society of Black Lawyers
Society of Editors
Solicitors' Family Law Association
Soroptimist International of GB and Ireland
South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre
Southall Black Sisters
St. Mungo's
Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
Stanko, Professor Elizabeth
Suzy Lamplugh Trust
Three Faiths Forum
Trades Union Congress
Union of Muslim Organisations
Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations
Unison
United Kingdom Men's Movement
United Reform Church
Victim Support
Victim's Voice
Welsh Women's Aid
Womankind
Women's Aid Federation of England
Women's National Commission
Women's Institute
Working with Women
World Zoroastrian Society

Many of the above organisations, either on their own initiative or at the prior request of the Home Office, forwarded additional copies across their own distribution networks. A number of copies were also sent to private individuals, while others were distributed at the consultation workshops the Home Office held with domestic violence victims.

English and Welsh language versions of "Safety and Justice" were also available from the Home Office website. In addition, the Home Office produced—and made available in both paper and electronic format—a summary leaflet, which was also translated into Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, and Welsh.

The Home Office received a total of 470 responses to "Safety and Justice". A list of all the organisations that responded can be found in Annex A of the "Summary of Responses to 'Safety and Justice: The Government's Proposals on Domestic Violence'", copies of which are available in the House Library and at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimpol/crimreduc/domviolence/publist.html.

A consultation document "Funding Community Groups" was published on 3 May 2001, and just under 7,000 copies were sent to interested groups in the voluntary and community sector, other Government Departments and local authorities. The document was also posted on the Home Office website making it more widely available. The consultation period was from 3 May to 23 July 2001, which included 27 consultation events around the country with a speaker from the Active Community Unit. A total of 235 written responses were received.

Many groups held their own meetings with local partners and contributed a joint response, 172 were received from respondents representing several organisations and 63 from individual organisations. Therefore, the total number of responses of 235 is representative of a much larger unknown number of organisations and individuals.

Convictions (Balance of Probabilities)

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which countries in *(a)* the European Union and *(b)* the rest of the world allow the conviction of suspected offenders on the balance of probabilities. [153047]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 5 February 2004]*: This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Correctional Services Board

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the implementation team reporting to the Correctional Services Board will be established. [152841]

Paul Goggins: On 2 February 2004 Eithne Wallis became the Change Programme Director for the Reducing Crime-Changing Lives reforms and is leading the implementation team. She has already recruited a number of staff and hopes to have the full team in place by the end of February.

Correspondence

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his hon. Friend the Minister for Immigration will meet the hon. Member for Leicester, East to discuss the case referred to in the letter dated 22 January. [151657]

Beverley Hughes: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 11 February 2004.

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter, reference: PO 17891/3, from the Member for Spelthorne, dated 22 December 2003, regarding Mr.and Mrs.H. Doba, Home Office reference: D 1006253; and if he will make a statement. [154197]

Beverley Hughes: There are matters that need resolving before I can reply to the hon. Member's letter. I expect to be able to write to him by 25 February.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Bolton, South-East of 16 September, 30 October, 30 December 2003 and 8 January 2004 regarding the case of Mr. Shish Jeewa (HO Ref. J1018485). [154832]

Beverley Hughes: I replied to my hon. Friend on 10 February 2004.

Crime and Disorder Partnerships

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the crime and disorder partnerships in England and Wales that *(a)* have and *(b)* have not had a full inspection; and if he will make a statement. [154301]

Ms Blears: There is no joint inspection regime for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). However, local authorities and the police, both of which are named as responsible authorities under section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, are subject to independent examination. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary is charged with examining and improving the efficiency of the Police Service in England and Wales, and the Audit Commission looks at how well local councils deliver their services under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Inspections of English district councils include community safety and community cohesion, and from 2005, the Audit Commission propose that this should also form part of the CPA for all councils where it will be covered under the councils' Corporate Assessment.

Both Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Audit Commission publish details of the organisations they have inspected on their websites.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* police authorities and *(b)* local authorities that have not incorporated section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; and what measures are open to members of the public if they feel that their local police authority or local authority is failing to implement section 17. [154302]

Ms Blears: Information is not available centrally on local/police authorities that have failed to incorporate section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. However, the Audit Commission looks at how well local councils deliver their services under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Inspections of English district councils, include community safety with a specific focus on section 17 compliance. From 2005 Safer and Stronger Communities with a similar focus on section 17 compliance will form part of the CPA for all top tier councils where it will be covered under the councils' Corporate Assessment.

Members of the public could lobby their elected council member (or MP) or appropriate chair of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership or the chair of the Police Authority if they believe their local authority or local police authority was failing to implement section 17.

They could also approach the Local Government Ombudsman if they have a specific complaint of maladministration.

They could ultimately undertake a judicial review action with a view to enforcing local/police authority compliance with section 17.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the 10 local authorities that have most successfully implemented section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; and what measures he has taken to spread best practice. [154303]

Ms Blears: The Home Office does not presently hold information on the successful implementation of section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 by local authorities. However, the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) will in future address compliance with section 17 across all local authorities. The CPA will therefore provide a clear indication of the level of section 17 compliance throughout England and Wales.

There are examples of good practice in implementing section 17 that have been identified in publications by Crime Concern, National Association of Care and Resettlement Offenders, the Local Government Association and Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary, Thematic Inspection on Crime and Disorder entitled "Calling Time on Crime".

The Government recognises that section 17 has not been universally well implemented and is committed to further raising the profile of section 17 across all relevant stakeholders. We shall also be spreading good practice via the Crime Reduction Website during 2004. We are currently piloting training in section 17 compliance through the Crime Reduction Centre.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list *(a)* the Home Office funding streams available to crime and disorder partnerships in North Wales and *(b)* the funding stream that have been accessed by each local authority, giving the amounts each local authority has been allocated. [154305]

Ms Blears: Home Office funding streams available to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in North Wales and the amounts allocated to each in 2003–04 are as follows.

Funding stream	CDRP	Amount (£)
Building Safer Communities Fund	Conwy	126,824
Building Safer Communities Fund	Denbighshire	128,620
Building Safer Communities Fund	Flintshire	155,071
Building Safer Communities Fund	Gwynedd	118,904
Building Safer Communities Fund	Anglesey	81,458
Building Safer Communities Fund	Wrexham	176,784
Small Retailers in Deprived Areas	Denbighshire	20,000
Small Retailers in Deprived Areas	Flintshire	37,400
Small Retailers in Deprived Areas	Gwynedd	21,150
Small Retailers in Deprived Areas	Anglesey	20,000
Small Retailers in Deprived Areas	Wrexham	25,000
Anti Social Behaviour Funding	Conwy	16,930
Domestic Violence funding	Split between Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Anglesey and Wrexham	80,250

In addition, the following was allocated to Basic Command Units (BCUs) in North Wales as part of this years BCU funding.

North Wales Force Basic Command Unit (BCU)	CDRPS within BCU area	Allocation (£)
Eastern	Flintshire and Wrexham	191,095
Central	Conwy and Denbighshire	136,892
Western	Anglesey and Gwynedd	99,655

Crime Statistics

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the incidence of *(a)* domestic violence and *(b)* hate crimes was for each local authority area in North Wales in each of the last 10 years. [154304]

Ms Blears: Domestic violence is not separately identified in the recorded crime statistics collected by the Home Office, therefore the number of incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales are measured by the British Crime Survey (BCS).

In the 2002–03 BCS there were an estimated 69 incidents of domestic violence, per 10,000 adults in Wales. In the 2001–02 BCS there were 139 incidents of domestic violence, per 10,000 adults in Wales. There are no comparable data for the years preceding 2001–02.

Within the recorded crime series, 'hate crimes' are deemed to be offences that are racially or religiously aggravated. There are seven separate offences that are classified as racially or religiously aggravated. These are; less serious wounding, harassment, common assault, criminal damage to a dwelling, criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling, criminal damage to a vehicle, and other criminal damage. Racially aggravated offences were added to the series from 1 April 1999, prior to that they would have been included in the original classifications. Religiously aggravated offences were recorded together with racially aggravated offences from April 2002.

Figures for these offences are not published for local authority areas. However, figures are available at police force area level, and are given in the table. Numbers of racially (or religiously aggravated) offences, recorded by North Wales Police.

	Offences recorded
1999–2000	35
2000–01	108
2001–02[1]	173
2002–03[2]	288

[1] North Wales police adopted the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in October 2001, which was earlier than the national implementation in England and Wales on 1 April 2002. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police. Therefore, following the introduction of the standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not comparable with previous years.

[2] Religiously aggravated offences were recorded together with racially aggravated offences from April 2002.

Driving Convictions

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the criteria to ensure a successful conviction for the charge of causing death by dangerous driving. [154334]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* A Home Office led review of road traffic offences involving bad driving is in progress. Charging practice in respect of the offence of causing death by dangerous driving has been taken into account during the course of the review. The review is nearing conclusion and will be followed by a public consultation exercise. We hope to publish the consultation paper soon.

Drugs Treatment (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* drug rehabilitation centres, *(b)* people treated in drug rehabilitation centres and *(c)* drug rehabilitation centre places there were in Wales in each year since 1997. [151733]

Mr. Touhig: I have been asked to reply.

Figures for *(a)* and *(c)* are not held centrally and figures for *(b)* are not available for 1997.

The Drug Misuse Database, which held records on a calendar year basis, shows 3,358 notified clients in treatment in Wales in 1998 and 5,436 in 1999.

The National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) was launched in April 2001 and is reviewed at the end of every financial year, hence figures are published on a financial year basis. For financial year 2001–02 NTDMS records 7,648 notified clients in treatment in Wales.

Extraditions (Russia)

Mr. Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many extradition requests have been made by the Russian authorities in the last five years; and how many have been granted. [154762]

Caroline Flint: General extradition arrangements as between the UK and the Russian Federation have been in place since 2001. To date, there have been four Russian requests for extradition. One of those cases is outstanding. None of the other three requests was granted.

Female Prisoners

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many pregnant women there are in prison; how many there were in each of the last five years; what policies the Prison Service has in place for the care and treatment of pregnant women; and whether these policies cover *(a)* dietary requirements, *(b)* access to showers and *(c)* requirements for the safe and respectful transfer of pregnant prisoners. [154218]

Paul Goggins: Precise information on the number of pregnant women in prison is not available, but recent estimates based on a survey suggest that at any one time about 120 women prisoners are pregnant.

Prison Service healthcare departments liaise with local NHS midwifery services and antenatal care is normally provided by midwives from the local NHS Trusts. The objective remains that these women have the same access to these services as the local population. The care plan for them will include diet and hygiene provision in line with the NHS policy.

The escorting procedures for pregnant women is covered by the Prison Service Security Manual and, where a woman's pregnancy is known to a prison, the prison is expected to assess the appropriate means of transport for her. This can involve the use of a private vehicle.

Firearms Consultative Committee

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he last met members of the representative bodies for shooting to discuss the future of the Firearms Consultative Committee; [154084]

(2) when he last met representatives of the police to discuss the future of the Firearms Consultative Committee; [154085]

(3) which members of the Firearms Consultative Committee have met Home Office Ministers to discuss the committee and its future; and when; [154086]

(4) what reasons underlay his decision not to consult representatives of shooting associations on the dissolution of the Firearms Consultative Committee; [154087]

(5) which consultations he undertook with stakeholders before the decision was taken to dissolve the Firearms Consultative Committee. [154092]

Caroline Flint: We have not met representative bodies for this purpose. As the Home Secretary announced in his written statement on 30 January, we have decided that it is important to consult on firearms matters on a broader basis than allowed by the statutory provision for the Firearms Consultative Committee.

Graffiti

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what penalties are available to magistrates when considering the punishment of those who graffiti. [153605]

Paul Goggins: Writing graffiti is an offence under the Criminal Damage Act 1971. Where the value of the damage is below £5000 the offender will be tried in a magistrates' court. The offender will then be subject to a maximum sentence of three months imprisonment or a £5,000 fine. If the value of the damage is above £5,000 the offender will be tried in a Crown Court and be subject to a maximum of 10 years imprisonment or an unlimited fine. At either court, community punishment is available for use where the court considers that the offence merits more than a fine but is not sufficiently serious to warrant imprisonment.

In addition the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 provides for local authorities to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for graffiti and fly posting. This power will be brought into force in March. Offenders will have to pay a £50 penalty or be prosecuted through the courts. Councils already have similar powers to tackle littering and dog fouling.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will propose legislative provisions for magistrates to impose sentences on those who graffiti public and private buildings which involve cleaning up graffiti; [153608]

(2) if he will introduce the option for magistrates to impose community service orders for those who graffiti. [153610]

Paul Goggins: The removal of graffiti is one of the tasks carried out by offenders who are sentenced to community punishment, the new name for community service. Community punishment is a sentencing option available to magistrates when convicting those who graffiti. The work done by offenders on community punishment orders is decided locally within the framework of the national standards for the supervision of offenders in the community. Dedicated litter and graffiti squads exist in a number of probation areas.

Heroin (Criminal Activity)

Mrs. Calton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the costs of criminal activity in connection with heroin use in each of the last five years. [154829]

Caroline Flint: Estimates of the costs of drug-related crime are not available annually, nor are they available by individual drug. However, a recent study published by the Home Office provides estimates of the total economic and social costs of Class A drug use and puts these in the range of £10.1 billion to £17.4 billion for the year 2000. The majority of these costs are attributable to heroin and crack cocaine users. The total figure includes the costs of drug-related crime, which are estimated to fall in the range £8.8 billion to £15.8 billion. The costs of

drug-related crime include victim costs and those accruing to courts, prisons and other parts of the criminal justice system.

HMP Bronzefield

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when HMP Bronzefield will open. [153275]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* Her Majesty's Prison Bronzefield is due to receive its first prisoners on 17 June 2004 as specified in the contract.

Home Detention Curfew

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will decide whether to grant a home detention curfew until the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service takes up his appointment on 1 June. [149087]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Decisions on whether to grant a prisoner release on home detention curfew are made by prison governors. There will however be exceptional cases where an offender who has successfully passed the risk assessment may be considered unsuitable for Home Detention Curfew (HOC) if to grant HDC would undermine public confidence in the scheme. The Home Secretary has decided that such exceptional cases should be referred to the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service who will take the final decision whether or not to grant HDC.

Martin Narey was appointed Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service on 6 January 2004. He will deal with all such decisions.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been released on the Home Detention Curfew Scheme. [154320]

Paul Goggins: The Home Detention Curfew Scheme has been in operation since January 1999. Up to and including 31 December 2003, there have been 86,000 people released on the scheme.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he will monitor the work of the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service. [152837]

Paul Goggins: The Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, Martin Narey, will be accountable directly to Ministers for reducing re-offending and for the efficient operation of public sector providers.

Parliamentary Questions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he will answer *(a)* the Questions with reference numbers 143057 and 143063 tabled by the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham on 4 December 2003 and *(b)* Question number 144992, tabled on 15 December 2003; [151036]

(2) when he will answer the Question, reference no.145030, tabled by the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham on 15 December 2003. [151033]

Fiona Mactaggart: The hon. Member received answers to the questions highlighted above on the following dates: 143057 on 20 January and 144992 on 26 January from my right hon. Friend Beverly Hughes; 143063 on 9 February from my hon. Friend Hazel Blears and 145030 on 10 February from my hon. Friend Paul Goggins.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the question reference 145289 on women prisoners tabled by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South on 16 December 2003. [154626]

Paul Goggins: I replied to the hon. Member on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1292W.

Police Cells

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many new prison cells are to be built in Lancashire, broken down by prison. [153504]

Paul Goggins: There are plans to build new prison cells at Wymott prison in Lancashire. Building work is in progress and is expected to be completed by mid-2004. There are also proposals to build new prison cells at Garth prison. Planning clearance for this site is currently being sought. The information requested is provided in the table.

Prison	*Number of new cells to be built*	*Expected date of completion*
Garth	180	2005
Wymott	180	2004

Prisoners

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on prison resources directed at the rehabilitation of prisoners aged 25 years and under. [152756]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service does not collate information separately on resources directed at rehabilitation for adult prisoners aged 25 and under. The Government have invested extra funds in improving regimes for prisoners and in programmes that will assist rehabilitation and resettlement. These include offending behaviour programmes, drug treatment programmes, education to improve basic and key work skills and the Custody to Work initiative which seeks to increase the number of prisoners getting jobs or education or training places after release.

In the Spending Review 2000 settlement additional funding of £162 million was allocated over the period 2001–02 to 2003–04 to strengthen work on resettlement and rehabilitation. In addition the funding for education and training for prisoners rose from £57 million in 2001–02 to £66 million in 2002–03 and £97 million in 2003–04.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is responsible for the commissioning and purchasing of all secure accommodation for under 18-year-olds. Under an annual service level agreement between the YJB and the Prison Service, the aim of the juvenile establishments is to provide a full and active day, with 30 hours a week purposeful activity, including good quality education and training provision while in custody. The present level of funding supporting education is approximately £17 million.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he plans to extend the pilot assessment and treatment programmes at HMP Whitemoor, HMP Frankland, and Broadmoor and Rampton hospitals to other prisons in the UK. [152838]

Paul Goggins: We have no plans at present to extend the assessment and treatment programmes to other prisons in the UK. Before any decisions about the future development of services can be taken, more time is needed to evaluate the work of the pilot sites.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* budgeted and *(b)* expected final costs are for the construction of HM Prison Bromsfield. [152706]

Paul Goggins: The prison under construction at Ashford, Middlesex is called HMP Bronzefield.

The prison is being procured through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Under the PFI process the overall contract price is fixed and includes both current construction and future operational costs. It will be paid back to the contractor as part of a unitary charge payable from when the prison opens in June 2004. It is the contractor who bears the risk of ensuring that its costs do not exceed its budget.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people held in prison are the subject of a deportation order, broken down by sex. [154177]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* The Prison Service does not record information on deportation orders on the inmate information system. Information on the number of persons held in prison who are the subject of a deportation order is not therefore available except by examination of individual case-files, at disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women are serving sentences of 12 months or less. [154178]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* On 30 November 2003 there were 773 women serving sentences of 12 months or less in prisons in England and Wales.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisons are being considered for closure. [152704]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office is working on a value for money case for a replacement programme to create a new generation of larger prisons with the facilities needed to deliver effective programmes designed to reduce re-offending. New large prisons could also provide economies of scale, which would allow us to close some smaller prisons and redirect resources to community punishments. This case will be subject of discussion in the forthcoming Spending Review, the outcome of which will be published.

There is an established procedure for the announcement of decisions to change the role of or close prisons. Once Ministers take a decision to change the role of or close a prison, staff and local MPs affected by the change or closure are briefed before the formal announcement.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that all prisons holding foreign nationals have in place *(a)* relevant policies and practices and *(b)* a foreign national co-ordinator employed to address the specific needs of the group of prisoners including (i) pre-release support, (ii) links to home country and family and (iii) procedures to manage deportation or repatriation. [151081]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* All Prison Service policies are required to have taken account of the needs of minority groups of prisoners including foreign nationals.

All Prisons have a race relations officers and a race relations management team responsible for the implementation of race relations locally and the fair treatment of ethnic minorities. Some prisons with larger numbers of foreign national prisoners have appointed a member of staff to work specifically to address their needs.

Pre-release support and links to their home country are managed as part of the normal sentence planning process, which applies to all prisoners serving over 12 months in prison.

The procedures used to manage deportation or repatriation are the same as those for any foreign national who has been refused entry to this country. The exception to this are the procedures for early departure provided by the Early Removal Scheme, as set out in the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Probation Service

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many employees the National Probation Directorate has had in each year since 2000. [151191]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 27 January 2004]*: The information requested is as follows.

Precise data prior to 2001 is not available, as the National Probation Directorate (NPD) was not established until April 2001. Records show that there were approximately 100 staff in November 2001, and 202 in November 2002.

In March 2003, the NPD had 360 employees, and 444 in December 2003. By April 2004 this total will have been reduced to 335.

The NPD provides a range of support (including finance and estates) to all 42 probation areas. This enables local areas to focus on operational issues and the reduction of reoffending.

R and D

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to whom his Department distributes expenditure on research and development; how many staff are employed as a result; and how many research establishments *(a)* the Department and *(b)* its agencies have in England and Wales. [154361]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office funds research by the department's Research Development and Statistics Directorate, which undertakes a wide range of research supporting the development of policy. There are also a number of directorates who conduct physical science research including the Police Scientific Development Branch. Scientific and social research is also commissioned by the Home Office policy directorates and its executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies.

The total number of Home Office staff involved in research and development in England and Wales is 1,135. A breakdown of these organisations, the staff numbers and the location of the organisation follows.

The regions listed in the table correspond to the boundaries of the Government Offices:

Home Office Directorate/Agency	*Number of staff*
London	
Research Development Statistics	436
Communications	—
Crime Reduction	2
Correctional Services	10
Immigration Nationality Directorate	21
Forensic Science Service	1
Criminal Records Bureau	5
Security Service	—
Police Scientific Development Branch	—
Youth Justice Board	2
Police Information Technology Organisation	386
Prison Service	12
Science Policy Unit	8
Dangerous and severe personality disorder programme	2
Total	885
South East	
Research Development Statistics	3
Police Scientific Development Branch	41
Total	44
South West	
Research Development Statistics	3
Total	3
West Midlands	
Research Development Statistics	3
Forensic Science Service	30
Total	33
East Midlands	
Research Development Statistics	3
Prison Service	6
Total	9
North West	
Research Development Statistics	3
Criminal Records Bureau	—
Total	3
North East	
Research Development Statistics	4
Total	4
Yorkshire and Humberside	
Research Development Statistics	4
Total	4
East	
Research Development Statistics	3
Police Scientific Development Branch	143
Total	146
Wales	
Research Development Statistics	4
Total	4

Note:
The numbers of staff given are only those connected with research.

Re-offending

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many offenders serving *(a)* a custodial sentence and *(b)* a community service sentence in each year since 1997 reoffended within (i) one year, (ii) two years, (iii) three years, (iv) four years and (v) five years of their release; [147361]

(2) how many young offenders serving *(a)* a custodial sentence and *(b)* a community service sentence in each year since 1997 reoffended within (i) one year, (ii) two years, (iii) three years, (iv) four years and (v) five years of their release. [147362]

Paul Goggins: The hon. Member will find the information she is requesting in 'Prison Statistics—England and Wales 2000, 2001, 2002'. One-year and two-year reconviction rates are given. Reconviction rates for three, four and five years for each year since 1997 are not yet available.

Reconviction rates for offenders serving a community sentence have also been published in the Home Office On Line Report 16/02.

Reconviction rates for community penalties for the first quarter of 2000 are available in Probation Statistics 2002 published on 21 January 2004. Reconviction rates for three, four and five years for each year since 1997 are not yet available.

The publications referred to can all be found in the Library.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of his Department's review of sexual assault referral centres will be made public. [153331]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* I refer my hon. and learned Friend to the answer I gave her on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 234–36W.

Somalia

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is a warrant for the arrest of Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf, the ruler of Puntland, Somalia. [154134]

Caroline Flint: There is no warrant for the arrest of Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf in the UK.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is a warrant for the arrest of General Mohammed Hersei Morgan of Somalia, the former Governor of Hargeisa. [154136]

Caroline Flint: There is no warrant for the arrest of General Mohammed Hersei Morgan in the UK.

Vehicle Theft

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cars were reported stolen in the year for which recent figures are available in the *(a)* Lancashire Police Authority, *(b)* Greater London Police Authority and *(c)* Warwickshire Police Authority areas. [153618]

Ms Blears: The numbers of 'Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle' offences recorded by the police in 2002–03, are given in the table.

Police force area	*Offences recorded*[1,2]
Lancashire	5,585
London Region[3]	58,739
Warwickshire	2,282

[1] Includes aggravated vehicle taking offences, and attempted theft of vehicles.

[2] The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) was introduced across England and Wales in April 2002. Some police forces adopted the standard prior to this date. The Metropolitan Police and City of London introduced the standard in April 2002, Warwickshire in April 2001, and Lancashire in August 2000. Broadly, the NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of crimes recorded by the police. Therefore, following the introduction of the standard, numbers of recorded crimes are not comparable with previous years.

[3] The London region comprises the Metropolitan Police and City of London Police.

Video Links

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department has taken to provide video links to prisons for the use of the *(a)* police, *(b)* probation service and *(c)* other services in interviewing prisoners. [154479]

Paul Goggins: Police, probation and other services can make local arrangements with prisons to use video link facilities in courts to interview prisoners, providing the technology is not being used for pre-trial hearings at that time.

Records on the use of video links for purposes other than pre-trial hearings are not held centrally. However, prisons are encouraged to make full use of any spare capacity within the video links system, and to liaise with police, probation and other services to ensure its effective use.

The Prison Service Video Links Enhancement Project has been set up with the aim of maximising the use of existing video link facilities, and to consider activities where the use of this technology will either improve performance or reduce costs.

Young Offenders

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what regulations govern the use of special cells for young offenders; and if he will make a statement. [154201]

Paul Goggins: Prison Service Order 1600 sets out the regulations that govern the use of special accommodation for all offenders.

The definition of special accommodation is:

(i) A cell which has been designated as a special cell; or

(ii) An unfurnished cell: a cell which is designated and usually used for ordinary accommodation purposes but from which the usual furniture has been removed and which is either totally unfurnished or does not contain basic items of furniture such as a table and a chair.

Special accommodation may be used for the temporary confinement of a violent or refractory prisoner, but only if its use:

(i) Is necessary in order to prevent the prisoner causing self-injury, injuring another prisoner or staff, or damaging property, or creating a disturbance; and

(ii) Has been properly approved (ie No prisoner shall be placed in special accommodation except on the prior authority of the Governor/Controller in charge).

A prisoner must not be confined in special accommodation as a punishment and, as soon as the original justification for the use of the special accommodation has ceased, the prisoner must be moved from that accommodation. If a prisoner refuses to move from special accommodation and his/her behaviour is such as to require the continued use of special accommodation, then special accommodation may continue to be used.

There are no specific rules governing the use of special accommodation for young offenders generally. Rule 51 of the YOI Rules allows temporary confinement in a special cell to be used for juveniles (under 18s).

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young offenders have been kept in solitary confinement for over *(a)* a day, *(b)* two days, *(c)* three days, *(d)* four days, *(e)* five days, *(f)* six days and *(g)* a week in each of the last five years. [154202]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service does not restrain prisoners in 'Solitary Confinement'. Prisoners and Young Offenders can either be subject to segregation procedures, or they can be held in 'Special Accommodation' (special cells or unfurnished cells).

The Prison Service does not centrally monitor the use of segregation.

The forms used to authorise the use of Special Accommodation are in the process of being reviewed, along with a general review of the policy on Use of Force. Unfortunately, the current forms require very little detail about individual incidents, and therefore there are no data for how long prisoners and young offenders have been held in special accommodation. However, very few prisoners are held in special accommodation for periods exceeding 24 hours.

The following table therefore shows the total number of young offenders who have been held in special accommodation for the years for which figures are currently available.

Number of young offenders restrained in Special Accommodation 1997–2002

	Males	*Females*	*Total*	*All types of establishments*
1997	194	31	225	2,836
1998	270	4	274	2,557
1999	317	29	346	2,223
2000	447	8	455	2,215
2001	372	43	415	2,778
2002	264	17	281	2,245

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the longest period of time that a young offender has been in solitary confinement is since 1997. [154203]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service does not restrain prisoners in 'Solitary Confinement'. Prisoners and young offenders can either be subject to segregation procedures, or they can be held in 'Special Accommodation' (special cells or unfurnished cells).

The length of time that young offenders are held in special accommodation is not collated centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young offenders from Wales were placed in special cells at youth prisons in each of the last five years. [154204]

Paul Goggins: Information on the origin of young offenders who are placed in special cells could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Workers' Compensation

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the employers he has met to discuss his proposals to make them responsible for compensating their workers who are injured in the course of duty. [150141]

Paul Goggins: Home Office officials from the Victims Unit and the Strategic Policy Team will be meeting the Confederation of British Industries shortly, and are arranging meetings with employers and other parties with an interest in the 'course of duty' proposals set out in the consultation paper 'Compensation and Support for Victims of Crime' published on 12 January.

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 417**

SESSION 2003–2004

26th January 2004—12th February 2004

Printed indexes to Hansard

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- The index to the daily parts of Hansard. This covers the same date range as the volume index but references may be different as a result of changes to the text and column numbering.
- The sessional index to Hansard. This contains references to material in the bound volumes for a whole session.

Indexes on the Parliamentary website

Daily part and volume indexes covering material from the beginning of the 1999/2000 session will also appear on the Parliamentary website at http://www.parliament.uk with links to the full text of Hansard.

SCOPE

The indexes include entries covering:

- The content of all material recorded in Hansard, including debates, procedural motions and questions.
- The names of all Members contributing to the Parliamentary business recorded in Hansard.
- The names of some types of Parliamentary business whenever they occur in Hansard. These are 'Ministerial statements', 'Business statements', 'Opposition days' and 'Estimates days'.

ARRANGEMENT

- All headings are in one word-by-word alphabetical sequence, with Members' contribution entries distinguished from other entries by italics.
- Where a Member contributes to Parliamentary business and is the subject of Parliamentary business there are separate contribution and subject entries, the subject entry coming first.
- Entries beginning 'Mac' and 'Mc' are sorted in one sequence as 'Mac'.
- 'St', when abbreviated for Saint, is filed as 'Saint'.
- Numbers are filed as if spelt out, e.g. '10 Downing Street' as if 'Ten Downing Street'.

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- *Specificity*—Entries summarise the overall content of a debate or question as specifically as the various POLIS thesauruses allow. For example, Education, Higher education, Universities or the name of a particular university is used depending on the breadth of the item.
- *Name headings*—Specific entries are included for the names of people, places, institutions, organisations, committees, programmes, initiatives, publications and legislation when these constitute the overall subject of an item.
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- *Committees*—Material about committees is indexed under 'Committees', types of committee (such as 'Select committees') and the names of individual committees (such as 'Home Affairs Select Committee').
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- *Members' names*—These are given in the form by which the Member prefers to be known.
- *Speaker and Chair*—Contributions by the Speaker and deputies are brought together under the heading 'Speaker and deputies'. Contributions from the chair during Committees of the Whole House are brought together under 'Chairman of Committee of the Whole House'. Significant rulings and statements (as opposed to routine comments) are indicated by the sub-heading 'Rulings and statements' in both cases.

Guidance on headings

- *Cross references*—'See' references indicate all the material has been entered under another heading. 'See also' references indicate that additional information may be found under another heading.
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REFERENCES

- References in the indexes are to columns rather than pages.
- References to debates, but not questions, are accompanied by the date of the item.
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  - References consisting of a number by itself indicate material taken on the floor of the House.
  - References ending in 'wh' indicate Westminster Hall sittings.
  - References ending in 'ws' indicate written statements.
  - References ending in 'w' indicate written questions.
- References under all headings except the names of Members contributing to Parliamentary business and the titles of legislation are listed in one numerical sequence irrespective of whether the material is taken on the floor of the House, is discussed at a Westminster Hall sitting, is a written statement or is a written question.
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  - *Chamber Debates* (which includes interventions and points of order as well as significant contributions to debates);
  - *Westminster Hall Debates* (covering all debates held as part of the Westminster Hall sittings);
  - *Written Statements* (consisting of ministerial statements issued in writing); and
  - *Questions* (which includes all written, oral and urgent questions).

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in connection with the progress of bills:

- 1R = First reading
- 2R = Second reading
- Com = Committee stage
- Rep = Report stage
- 3R = Third reading
- res = resolution
- amendt(s) = amendment(s)
- * = matter taken formally without debate or division
- (HL) = Bill starting in House of Lords
- (SP) = Bill in Scottish Parliament.

Parliamentary background

- The Parliamentary website at http://www.parliament.uk contains a range of information about Parliament and the full text of some Parliamentary papers and proceedings including Hansard.
- Information on current Parliamentary business is provided in the House of Commons Information Office *Weekly Information Bulletin*, available on the website and from The Stationery Office (020 7873 8499).
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